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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

Submitted by

Charles Stockdale Hempstead

(A.B., Ohio Wesleyan, 1923)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts.

1928.

Bible-Prophecies  
Prophecy  
History-Philosophy  
Series

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## INTRODUCTION

Anyone who reflects upon the long history of the race will find there are two questions which persistently press for an answer: one of them is "What actually happened?", and the other is "Why did it happen as it did?" The answer to the first question is the problem of the historian. His answer comes only at the end of a prolonged and painstaking study of sources. His task is to gather the facts, subject them to critical scrutiny, and after organizing them, describe those facts so as to make the story live again for his readers. By this critical, disinterested, study of sources, the historian is able to reconstruct for us the events of the past as he conceives them to have occurred. Thus far his work is largely descriptive. But men are not satisfied merely with the correct description of the past. They want to know also why these things happened as they did. The historian denies any right to interpret history by putting it into its setting in the universe and limits his interpretation to the "Knowledge of inner relations."

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ite lies outside the sphere of human experience, and experience is the sphere of history". But men are no more satisfied with this interpretation of history which stops at establishing the inner relations in a cause and effect series, than they are with a knowledge of the facts. Such an interpretation has neither beginning nor end, nor any real inner unity. Men desire a sense of completeness in their view of history, which results only from a consideration of the final causes. Is there any ultimate reality behind history? Is there progress in this succession of events? Is there any inner meaning and unity in it? Is there a purpose discernible in its operation? These are questions which will not down, and as long as there are human minds they will speculate upon them. One of the most august attempts to answer these questions was made by the Prophets of Israel, and the results of their labors may be termed the prophetic interpretation of history.

As a matter of fact, the history of thought reveals many attempts at a comprehensive interpretation of history. These may all be classed under three heads, the spiritualistic, the materialistic, and the positivistic. Under the spiritualistic interpretation may be grouped three different types of thought: the mythological, the religious, and the rational. The earliest attempt at an interpretation of

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As a matter of fact, the history of thought reveals many attempts at a comprehensive interpretation of history. These may all be classed under three heads, the spiritualistic, the scientific, and the positivistic. Under the spiritualistic interpretation may be grouped three different types of thought: the theological, the religious, and the rational. The earliest attempt at an interpretation of

history was made by the ancient story-tellers in the form of popular myths. These myths were explanations as well as narrations. They sought to explain "the marvelous events by causes more marvelous still". The chief criticism to be passed upon this method is that it centered attention exclusively upon the unusual rather than the ordinary and resorted to the miraculous as the sole explanation of events. Thus it is both incomplete and unscientific. The religious interpretation makes history the scene of the working out of the Divine Will of One God, according to a preconceived plan, rather than the play of rival gods. Everything is referred to the Divine Will. The movements of armies, the rise and fall of kingdoms, -- these occur because God wills it. History becomes a drama which ends in the destruction of the wicked and exaltation of the righteous. History is all referred to a God who elects one nation as his "chosen people", exercises a "righteous government" over the world according to a "consistent plan" which culminates in a society of righteous men. This interpretation began with the prophets and culminated in Christianity. It was expounded most systematically by Augustine in his "City of God". It controlled the thinking of the West for fifteen hundred years and represents a great contribution to the history of thought. This religious interpretation of history gave way before the rise of modern science, especially in view of the

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work of Copernicus and of Darwin. Copernicus removed the world from the center of the universe, and Darwin dethroned man from his central place. This led to the Deist's conception of the world as a self-running mechanism in which natural law was substituted for divine intervention. Man was no longer the special concern of God. In reaction to the skepticism which resulted, Hegel developed his conception of history as the revelation of the Divine Idea. He traced the development of the revelation of the Spirit in history. He replaced miracle with evolution. History is the process of the Absolute revealing himself. The difficulty with Hegel's rationalistic interpretation of history is that it adheres too strictly to the logical. Reality is deeper than a logical synthesis of thesis and antithesis.

Feurbach reacted against the absolute Idealism of Hegel by making man a creature of appetite and not mind. This opened the door to a materialistic interpretation of history. The religious and rational interpretation of history proceeded from above and within man, while the materialistic proceeded from around him. History, instead of being a revelation of the Divine Will or the Divine Idea, became the product of the chance union of external forces. Mind itself was the product of the struggle for existence. Outstanding illustrations of this material-

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istic interpretation of history are found in H. T. Buckles' "History of Civilization in England", and in Karl Marx's "economic theory of history" in which everything is made the product of economic forces.

Both of the preceding interpretations of history, the spiritualistic and the materialistic, are metaphysical. One claims that the ultimate reality behind historic movements is Will or Mind, the other asserts that it is Matter. Now the modern positivistic interpretation of history agrees with the preceding spiritualistic interpretation of history insofar as it insists that mind must be taken into consideration if we are to explain history. The positivist agrees with the materialist in affirming that matter plays its part in shaping human destiny. The true interpretation of history must include both psychological and materialistic factors. However, he differs from both the spiritualist and the materialist when he insists that history is not to be referred to any ultimate reality whether it be Will, Mind, or Matter. The materialist claims that matter is real and thus that chance is the only force in history. The idealist claims that spirit alone is real, and refers the events of history to a realm of ideas or a Divine Will. The positivist claims that we can know nothing of the forces behind history. We are to interpret history simply and solely by itself. We are shut up to the

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empirical order of the cause and effect series which includes both the psychological and the materialistic.

From the standpoint of the scientific study of history there is much in this attitude of the positivist with which we are in hearty accord. He tells us that he takes this attitude in the interest of truth; that to approach history with any other purpose than to understand it and truthfully reproduce it is to distort history until, so far as the facts are concerned, it is practically worthless. If the religious interest is dominant, the writer distorts the facts in order that he may fit them into a religious scheme. The same can be said for the rationalist and the materialist. Thus the trustworthiness of ancient sources and modern histories depends upon the extent to which the writer has freed himself from the control of some theory or scheme of history. Possibly as good an illustration of this peril is found in the comparison of the Books of Kings with the Books of Chronicles. Both books deal largely with the same materials. The editor of the Kings copied his sources as he found them, but put them into an historic framework which can be easily recognized. The editor of the Chronicles took these same facts and worked them over into an ecclesiastical scheme until his book becomes practically worthless to the historian as a source book of the time about which he wrote. Now, in the interest

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of truth, we must admit the danger of writing history from a theological or any other point of view. Still, simply because from a scientific point of view, history is to be interpreted upon the empirical plane, it does not mean that such an interpretation is final, nor that nothing can be said as to the meaning and purpose behind history. The naive way in which the positivist ascribes a kind of crude reality to matter, making it the opposite of the mind in shaping history, may be useful from the scientific historian's point of view, but that does not make it true of ultimate reality. Matter may be simply phenomenal and thus but the language of the Divine Mind by which he makes known his will to men. We are no more justified in asserting that we can not say anything at all about the divine mind or will which is behind phenomena. This interpretation of history does not lie in the sphere of the historian, but we insist that he has no right to deny the philosopher and the religious thinker the right to seek a comprehensive interpretation of history in which he sees meaning and value. One of the classic affirmations of the divine government of the world is found in the prophets of Israel and their interpretation of history merits our consideration.

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to that group of writing prophets which began with Amos and ended with Deutero-Isaiah. It is claimed that with the return to Jerusalem of the Babylonian exiles in 537 B. C., prophecy died out in Israel, and the priest became the leader of thought and apocalypticism replaced prophecy. This of course is true in a strict sense. The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. brought Israel's national existence to an end. Israel, except for the few years during the Maccabean Revolt, was never again to enjoy national freedom, but was to be the vassal of one world power after another. With nationalism in ruins, Israel's only hope for retaining her racial characteristics was to find the unifying principle along religious rather than national lines. Consequently the Jews were organized into a religious community with the government in the hands of the priestly class. Naturally, the stress was laid upon ecclesiasticism and ceremonialism, and, as a result, we miss the moral passion and the universalism of the seventh and eighth century prophets. Side by side with this priestly development, prophecy also changed its character, and became apocalyptic. Instead of prophecy being anchored in empirical facts of the present, it turned to idealizing the distant future. Jehovah no longer used other nations to accomplish his purposes, but intervened miraculously in the affairs of men. The imagination,

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once cut loose from empirical mooring, soared unfettered, and fancy soon outdistanced reason; critical thinking gave way before a boundless faith. In a certain sense apocalypticism was inevitable. With national life in ruins, the post-exilic prophets in order to save the waning faith of the people could only appeal to supernatural intervention to restore their nation to its national respectability. If prophecy became unduly nationalistic, it was born out of the fear that the unique elements in Hebrew life would be dissipated through an easy-going liberalism. Granting the truth of all this, still it seems that many men have been too harsh in their criticism of these post-exilic prophets. Their task was to weld a broken, disorganized and discouraged people into the semblance of a nation. This they did, and if we miss the characteristic notes of the earlier prophets in their writings, it is simply because they were faced with a different problem. Since the essence of prophecy is to address one's self to the task at hand, we should have no compunctions about using the term prophecy in the larger sense which will include all that group which has been traditionally classed as the major and minor prophets. We shall include in this paper the survey of the interpretation of history of the writing prophets from Amos down through the author of the book of Daniel.

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We are not to make the mistake, however, in thinking that the prophets approach this problem from the angle of the philosopher and historian. This they do not do. They did not ponder upon the movements in history, and proceed from them to the affirmation of a purposive power behind historic movements which alone would offer a reasonable and satisfactory explanation of them. We have no basis for believing that the prophets moved by close inductive reasoning from unrelated empirical facts to a unitary Being lying back of them as their only reasonable cause and explanation. Rather, they began with a profound religious experience in which they were made certain of the existence of a righteous, gracious, and sovereign God, then, proceeded from that experience to find confirmation for this profound conviction. Instead of moving from the circumference to the center, they proceeded from the center to the circumference. Neither have we any basis for viewing the prophets as critical historians, whose primary interest lay in relating the empirical facts as they actually happened. Past history they took pretty much as they found, without critical examination, frequently, even reconstructing these facts to fit into their conception of the divine government of the world. Contemporary events they reported with accuracy, but gave interpretations of these events which are clearly colored by their general religious outlook upon life. The prophets were, a-

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bove all else, great religious personalities, so that for them the events of history were used as confirmations of their profound belief in Jehovah's righteous and gracious government of the world. Insofar as the prophets made history the sole expression of Jehovah's sovereign will, there is much to criticise in their interpretation of history.

Finally, the prophets were never able to free themselves entirely from the trammels of nationalism, consequently they never attained to a purely universal outlook. True universalism can never be reached so long as the nation is the unifying center; only when unity is found in a Person, can a really comprehensive view of the world be gained. Many writers have credited the prophets with having a philosophy of history. This can only be done when that term is used in a rather loose way. A philosophy of history would involve an attempt to think one's way through to a reasonable and impartial, as well as a comprehensive view of the historic movements of the world. In the light of what has been said above as to the lack of a critical approach to past history, the failure to follow the method of inductive reasoning from empirical facts, and the inability of the prophets to rid themselves of nationalistic modes of thought, one is hardly justified in crediting the prophets of Israel with a philosophy of history. It would be more exact to speak of their efforts to view history under

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a few general ideas as the prophetic interpretation of history. While this interpretation includes much which is only temporary and provincial, still, beneath this outer shell, there is a kernel of truth which is in accord with the finest thought of all time. There is lasting value in their profound conviction that history has an undergirding of an intelligent and consistent purpose which gives it unity and direction. The assumption that history is the revelation of a providential care, a righteous rule and a gracious purpose is of lasting significance.

The aim of this paper is to give a systematic exposition of the ideas of the prophets of Israel relative to the question as to whether or not history can be comprehended under one or more general ideas. It is not primarily concerned with the question of the contribution which the prophets of Israel have to make to a philosophy of history. Quite naturally, criticism of the prophetic ideas and a consideration of the premanent validity of many of their conceptions will be brought out. The paper, however, is primarily expository in nature, and its scope confined within the limits of expounding the interpretation of history as developed by the prophets of Israel.

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## CHAPTER I

## THE COVENANT RELATION

## The Providential Care of Jehovah

The soil in which the interpretation of history of each Hebrew prophet grew was his conviction that the Hebrews were the chosen people of Jehovah. The basic assumption of each prophet was that Jehovah is Israel's god, and Israel is Jehovah's people. To this conviction of Jehovah's close relation with Israel is no doubt due the prophets' conception of Jehovah's activity in Israel's history. And it is from their conception of Jehovah's relation to Israel's history, that the prophets moved out to their belief in his operations in the history of all nations. This conviction was born out of reflection upon the meaning of an actual historic experience. The redemption of the little slave nation, Israel, from her strong Egyptian oppressors was so miraculous an event that it could be explained only upon the assumption that Jehovah alone had done it, and by so doing had chosen Israel as his own. The profound impression which this great historic act made upon the minds of the Hebrew people is evidenced by the frequent reference made to it by all of the prophets. Julius Bower says of the Exodus, "This was the foundation of all their great historical experiences, a never-to-be-forgotten deed of Provi-

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dence. Yahweh could save his people from all perils!" (1) And Robinson says that "Out of faith in the God of Israel, begun with the deliverance from Egypt, sprang the hope of the nation." (2) Here was the beginning of a faith in Jehovah's providential care and redemptive purpose for his people Israel which the nation never lost. It is exceedingly doubtful if the later extension of the providential care of Jehovah to all people could ever have arisen, had not the Hebrews first been profoundly convinced of his special care for them.

This close relation between Jehovah and Israel was made explicit and definite in the idea of the covenant. The term was used in three different senses in Israel. First, it meant a mutual agreement arrived at by two parties upon an equal footing. In this sense the relations between Jacob and Laban, Genesis 31:44, are described. (cf. Genesis 21:32) But the term is also used to express a command or decree. ( II Samuel 5:3; Joshua 7:11; Deut. 33:9.) In this case the parties do not stand upon the same plane, but the one who is superior lays down for the weaker party the conditions for continued peace between them. Finally, the term covenant meant a promise. Thus, in Genesis 15:18, Jehovah pledges himself to increase the seed of Abraham and

1. Julius Beyer, "Literature of the Old Testament" p 66
2. Robinson, H. W. "Religious Ideas of the Old Testament. p 185

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to give his descendents the land of Canaan. (Exodus 24:7,8) When this term is applied to the relation between Jehovah and his people it carries all three of these meanings. The idea of mutual agreement of course is not made between two parties upon an equal footing; nevertheless, Israel is thought of as agreeing to the condition upon which continued peace between Jehovah and their nation depends. (Deut. 29) The covenant then is used to express on the one hand Jehovah's pledge to Israel that he will deal graciously with her, making that nation his special care, and ultimately bringing it to a high and noble destiny among the nations, (Deut. 26:18, 19.) and on the other hand Israel's pledge of obedience to Jehovah and his commandments which he laid down as the condition for his continued favor. (Deut. 26:17) Thus the fundamental idea behind the covenant made between Jehovah and Israel is the gracious dealing of their God with the people of his choice. The requirements laid down are simply the moral conditions necessary for the continued operation of that gracious purpose. The eighth century prophets did not arrive at an absolute monotheism. Their conception of Jehovah's favor to Israel is essentially henotheistic; especially marked is this among the Deuteronomic historians. The prophets did however, attain to an ethical monotheism which paved the way for the more thoroughgoing monotheism of Deutero-Isaiah and Jonah.

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The discussion of the covenant relation falls naturally into two main divisions: Jehovah's relation to Israel, and Israel's relation to Jehovah. Under the first division will be considered the choice of Israel by Jehovah, evidences of Jehovah's gracious operation in Israel's past history, and his continued love for them.

These two fundamental points of view are expressed roughly by the "J" and the "E" historians. The "J" narrator writes his history from the standpoint of Jehovah dealing graciously with Israel. He gives as the scheme of Israel's history Noah's curse of Canaan and blessing of Shem and Japheth. He puts the golden age of Israel's history at the beginning, and traces Jehovah's special

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These two fundamental points of view are expressed roughly by the "I" and the "E" historians. The "I" historian writes his history from the standpoint of Jehovah dealing graciously with Israel. He gives as the scheme of Israel's history Noah's curse of Canaan and blessing of Shem and Japheth. He puts the Golden Age of Israel's history at the beginning, and traces Jehovah's special

relation to Israel through his promise to Abraham, the providential guidance of Jacob, Joseph and Moses, and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Jehovah is a God, "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth, keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin." (Exodus 34:6, 7b.) To him Israel owes all of her victories. (Exodus 34:11) On the other hand the "E" narrator puts greater stress upon the ethical requirements laid upon Israel. The covenant in "E" is moral. (Exodus 20:22-23:19) He utters a polemic against the idolatry (Exodus 32:22-34) from which Jehovah called Israel even in Egypt. (Joshua 24:14) The ideal age was not placed at the beginning of Israel's history, but in the period of the Judges, (Judges 8:22 f) when Israel had a theocratic form of government. Jehovah is "a holy God; he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins; if ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then will he turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." (Joshua 24:19,20) The prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries can be roughly grouped under these two divisions. Hosea and Jeremiah followed the leading of the "J" narrator in their stress on the love of Jehovah for Israel. This does not mean that they excluded the moral for in both instances they conceived of love in a strictly moral sense,

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Amos and Isaiah, on the other hand, lean more in the direction of "E", putting the relation of Israel to Jehovah upon a more strictly legalistic basis. The two lines converge in Deuteronomy, and the evil tendencies in each are criticised by Ezekiel.

### The Choice of Israel.

We need not stop to argue that the prophets believed that Israel was set apart as the chosen people of Jehovah. That belief lies in the background of the thinking of all the prophets. (Amos 3:2; Hosea 11:1, 9:10; Isaiah 1:2-4, 13:11; Jeremiah 2:32; Deut. 4:37, 7:6; 10:15, etc.) The prophets differ however as to the time when this choice of Israel was made. For the most part they consider it to have taken place when Israel was called out of Egypt. (Hosea 11:1, 13:4-5; Amos 9:7) There is a suggestion in Hosea that this relation began at Bethel. (12:3-6) Isaiah, on the other hand, never goes back farther than the period of the judges. (Isaiah 1:26) "And I will restore thy judges as at the first and thy counsellors as at the beginning." Jehovah's call of the nation he seems to make synonymous with the founding of Zion. (Isaiah 14:32, 8:18, 28:16). Ezekiel on the other hand pushes back Jehovah's choice of Israel to pre-Egyptian days. (Ezekiel 16:8)

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variously conceived. At first the Israelites held to an extremely narrow view of it. Jehovah's choice of Israel carried with it special favor and privileges. (Isaiah 30:26) But this conception Amos moralized when he made his great pronouncement "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities." Someone has called this the most significant "therefore" in the history of thought. With it Amos turned the choice of Israel from privilege into responsibility, and opened the door for ethical monotheism to enter the world. The early prophets ascribed no definite motive to Jehovah in his choice of Israel, neither did they state any concrete purpose to be carried out by Israel. Hosea sees it to be only an expression of Jehovah's love. (11:1) This love is made moral, however, in that it was grounded in Jehovah's righteous character. The word "hesedh" which Hosea used to describe this relation might best be translated loyalty. Election, with Hosea, thus means opportunity. Isaiah makes the first clear statement of a purpose in Jehovah's election of Israel. It is to reveal Jehovah as the Universal God. "The lofty looks of man shall be brought low and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day." (Isaiah 2:11) Jeremiah sees in it Jehovah's purpose to reveal his character to all mankind. "Let not the

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wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth, glory in this that he hath understanding and knoweth me that I am Jehovah who exerciseth loving kindness, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight." (Jeremiah 9:24) Israel is the nation chosen for this task. "For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, that they may be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise and for a glory." (Jeremiah 13:11) Ezekiel sees in Jehovah's choice of Israel, his aim to make known his nature in the eyes of the nations, and to guard it from profanation. He insists that the choice of Israel was not due to any merit in Israel, for Israel had always been idolatrous and rebellious. (Ezekiel 20:8,9) The high-tide of Old Testament thought in this regard however, came with Deutero-Isaiah and Jonah. For them election meant service (42:21, 44:23) and Jehovah's purpose was that Israel become an active missionary to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6) The exposition of this mission we shall put off to a later section.

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## The Gracious Dealings of Jehovah Revealed in Israel's History.

The prophets considered the glorious past of the nation to be evidence of Jehovah's choice of Israel. The history of the nation is one long witness to Jehovah's providential care for his chosen people. This conviction is expressed by both the "J" and "E" narrators. Amos cites the destruction of the Amorites, the deliverance from Egypt, the leading through the wilderness, and the presence of prophets in the nation as evidence of Jehovah's regard. (Amos 2:9-12) Isaiah states the same idea under the figure of a father's concern for his children (Isaiah 1:2) and a vinedresser's care for his vineyard. (5:1-7)

The idea, however, is most clearly developed in Hosea. "There is no truth uttered by later prophets about Divine Grace which we do not find in germ in Hosea." (1) He casts Israel's entire history into the mold of the marriage relation. Doubtless the reason for it lies in Hosea's own domestic tragedy. In the first three chapters of his book, he relates this black chapter in his life. The story as it stands is so interwoven with an allegorical application of it to Israel's relation to Jehovah, that it is difficult to separate the facts of Hosea's own experience from the allegorical material. However, in broad outlines it would seem

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that Hosea had married an innocent girl. With the birth of his wife's third child, he realized that this child was not his own. He named this son "No people of mine". (1) Heartbroken over his wife's disloyalty, he put her from his home, and she went to the house of her paramour. After this she drifted from bad to worse until finally she had sunk to the level of a common slave girl. But Hosea found that he still loved his wife, in spite of her disloyalty, although she had unthinkably disgraced herself. So he redeemed Gomer from her paramour for the purpose of ultimately restoring her to full marital standing. But before he can do that there must be a period of discipline, during which she is to be no-man's wife and by means of which her fitness to be restored to full connubial rights is tested. We do not know what the conclusions of this domestic tragedy were. But that is relatively unimportant. The great thing to note here is that this man, like so many others, found a deeper meaning in and a larger application of his own sorrow. From this experience he emerged with a new insight into the relations between Jehovah and his beloved people. Through his own invincible love for Gomer, Hosea came to the conviction that such a love must characterize Jehovah's relation to Israel.

1. The reason for holding that Hosea did not know of Gomer's disloyalty before this, lies in the fact that to his first two children he simply gave the general prophetic names "Jezreel" and "No mercy to you".



With the fresh insight into God's character gathered from his own inner experience, Hosea put the whole history of Israel into the framework of the marriage relation. Other nations had conceived of their nation as the wife of their god, but this relation was formerly thought of in a naturalistic sense. The gods of the nations were wedded to their land. Hosea put the relation upon a moral basis, when he made it to exist between Jehovah and his people.

In the mind of Hosea, Israel's history is explained by Jehovah's everlasting love for his nation. The courting of Israel by Jehovah in Egypt culminated in their marriage in the wilderness. At that time Israel was innocent. (2:14,15; 9:10; 11:1) But when they came into Canaan, Israel proved disloyal to Jehovah. Religiously, Israel was disloyal in forsaking Jehovah for the Baalim with their disgusting, idolatrous and immoral worship. (9:1-5; 2:5; 1:7) Politically, Israel is disloyal in forsaking a theocratic government for the rule of human kings, (13:9-12; 7:1-7) and in seeking national safety through political alliances with Assyria and Egypt. (7:8-13; 8:8,10; 12:1) Finally, in her social life, Israel is utterly estranged from Jehovah in that revolution (4:2), and drunkenness (3:11-14), immorality, social oppression (5:10), murder (6:9), and robbery are rampant. Such conduct was so horrible in

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the eyes of Hosea that he selected the worst name he could think of as a fitting description of Israel's unfaithfulness - it was nothing short of harlotry to forsake Jehovah worship for the Baalim. And from this illicit union with the Baal principle Israel brought forth children who bore the stamp of their father and were estranged from Jehovah. (3:7) The spirit of whoredom was in their very blood. (5:4) They had lost all knowledge of Jehovah. (4:6; 4:11-14) Israel believed that all the natural goods of life were love gifts from the Baalim who were the gods of the lands. (2:8) Therefore, to prove that it was Jehovah and not Baal who gives prosperity, Jehovah will send a famine in the land. (2:9) To prove that it is Jehovah who is responsible for Israel's national salvation, and not Assyria and Egypt, with whom they make alliances, Israel will be taken captive by these in whom they trust. (2:11; 10:6, 11; 11:5) Jehovah divorces Israel. (9:15b) But this exile is only disciplinary. (3:4) Jehovah still loves Israel (14:4) and Hosea ideally pictures the day when Jehovah will again bring Israel into the wilderness, the scene of their early betrothal when Israel was innocent, and there they will again plight their faith. Israel will again call Jehovah "my husband" and he will betroth her with an everlasting plighting of faith upon the firm basis of righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, mercy, and faithfulness. (2:19)

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This will open the way for Jehovah to once again shower upon his bride the natural gifts of life, (2:21f; c 14) and establish an era of peace between animals and nations. (2:18) In that day Israel will forget her former loves (14:8) and own Jehovah as God, and Jehovah will bind Israel to him as his people. (1:11; 2:23)

From Hosea's time, on, this conception of a marriage between Israel and Jehovah became a patent figure among the prophets. Jeremiah, strongly influenced by Hosea, carries it out in his prophecies of a century later. (c 2) Even Ezekiel, in whom the covenant idea is so prominent, develops the figure of Israel's harlotry. (Ezekiel 16:15f)

In Deuteronomy Israel's history is looked at from the viewpoint of the covenant relation. A religious cast is thrown over Israel's entire past. It is generally agreed that chapters 12-26 of Deuteronomy comprise the book which was found in the temple at Jerusalem during the time of its renovation under Josiah. (Deut. c 12-26) These chapters represent a codification of the teaching of the eighth century prophets. It was made in the interest of reforming Israel's religious life. The religious reform of Judah begun by Hezekiah ( II Kings 18:4) was blocked by Manasseh, 692 B. C. - 638 B. C. Throughout this period Assyria was the controlling power in Palestine. To

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win the favor of his overlord, Manasseh aped Assyrian customs. Into Jerusalem he introduced the Assyrian worship of the Queen of Heaven, and their practice of human sacrifice. The purpose of the Deuteronomic Code was to break the hold which idolatry had upon Israel. They stressed monotheism over and against the tendency to religious syncretism. Jehovah was the One God for Israel and was to be worshipped only in his sanctuary at Jerusalem. To sever the grip of idolatry, they advocated the destruction of all local sanctuaries and High Places, and the centralization of worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. Finally, to stem the tide toward the loss of national identity through the copying of foreign customs, these men stressed that for Jehovah there was only one people and that was Israel.

Following the Deuteronomic Code, the historians of the Exile rewrote Israel's entire history from a religious point of view. "The doctrine that 'righteousness exalteth a nation' while wickedness is a sure prelude to national disaster has been truly said to form the essence of his philosophy of history." (1) Since they believed idolatry to be the source of all unrighteousness, the destiny of a nation was decided upon the grounds of that nation's acceptance or rejection of the practice of idolatry. The idolatrous nations are to be destroyed and those who worship Jehovah will be saved. This is the reason for Israel's success in Canaan.

1. S. R. Driver, International Critical Commentary, p XXXII

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(Deut. 6:20-25) Israel's task is to utterly exterminate the idolatrous Canaanites. (7:2) But upon this strictly legalistic basis Israel herself would have been destroyed, since she had fallen into idolatry in the wilderness. ( c 9 ) Thus Israel's history is to be explained only on the basis of love of Jehovah for Israel expressed in the covenants which he made with Israel (7:6) and his faithfulness to these covenants once they were made. (7:9,10)

The Deuteronomists conceived of three covenants made between Israel and Jehovah: the one with the Patriarchs, (4:13; 7:17) which included a promise to increase the seed of Abraham (1:8; 6:10) and to give to his descendants the land of Canaan (6:18); the second covenant made at Horeb was based upon the Decalogue (4:13, 5:12, 9:9; 4:23); and finally the covenant made at Moab (29:1; 29:9,12,14; 26:17-19) we have preserved in Deuteronomy 12-26. The conditions upon which this Deuteronomic covenant was made, were a pledge of faithfulness upon the part of Jehovah (26:17) and of obedience upon the part of Israel. (26:18)

All of Israel's past history is reviewed in the light of Jehovah's faithfulness to the first covenant made with Abraham to increase his seed and give them a home, (7:8; 1:8; 4:31,37; 7:12; 8:18) and his fundamental love for Israel. (7:8; 23:6) This restrains him from destroying Israel when

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in reality she should have been wiped out since she lapsed into idolatry in the wilderness. (9:7-10:11) To Jehovah's faithfulness to his promise made to Abraham Israel owes her deliverance from Egypt, (4:32-38; 6:21-23) and her safe passage through the wilderness, (1:19; 2:7; 8:15) the extermination of the idolatrous nations in Palestine (9:3-5) and the gift to Israel of a home in a fertile land. (6:10; 8:7-10, 12f) Jehovah has been like a loving father to Israel (8:2, 3, 16). The hardships of the passage through the wilderness were simply the Father's discipline of his child for its ultimate good, (8:5) or a testing of Israel's fitness to enjoy the prosperity which awaited her in Canaan. (8:16)

Ezekiel follows the leading of both Hosea and Deuteronomy. He describes Israel's defection from Jehovah in terms of harlotry, (16:17, 26, 28) and of a broken covenant. (16:59) Ezekiel differs from Deuteronomy and the prophets in that he traces Israel's idolatry to the very beginning of her history. (16:3) All her history is the record of one long apostasy from Jehovah. (16:45; 20:7; 29:9, 14, 22; 20:13, 16b, 28, 30) The only reason that Israel has a history at all is because Jehovah pitied her (16:6) and saved her out of regard for the honor of his own name before the other nations. (20:44)

We are struck by the attitude toward other nations which results from this conception of Jehovah's exclusive concern

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for Israel. Neither Hosea nor Deuteronomy have broadened out so as to include other nations in their scheme of history. Of course, when Hosea stresses the ethical condition of Jehovah's love, he is headed in the direction of universalism. But the doom for his nation was too near, for him to think of Jehovah's relation with other nations; he was too much absorbed in the possibility of Jehovah's continued relation with his own. The Deuteronomists, however, were sharply nationalistic. Other nations were not included in their interpretation of history. If other nations did touch Israel, it was only as enemies of Jehovah (23:4-7; 25:17-19) which must be destroyed. The only goal for history was the exaltation above the nations, of Israel, provided she was obedient. (26:19; 28:12b,13; 28:1; 15:66) Such nationalistic expressions are repugnant to our moral sense, and represent a much lower conception in general than the ethical monotheism of the eighth century prophets. Their interpretation of history was little more than a superb example of a gross national egotism. Furthermore, the subordination of natural law to ethical categories, both in Hosea and in Deuteronomy, is not true to fact. The sun shone alike upon the just and the unjust. The interpretation of history by the Deuteronomic historians is a highly fanciful picture, with scarcely any value other than an interesting historical phenomenon.

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There is one aspect of the covenant relation which saves it from being hopelessly nationalistic, and that is the insistence by Amos that favor creates responsibility, and therefore ingratitude merits greater punishment.

#### Israel's Relation to Jehovah.

The conviction that Jehovah's continued favor is conditioned upon Israel's obedience to his ethical requirements, and that failure to meet these duties would result in the destruction of the nation, was a possession of all the prophets. With the prophets these moral requirements of Jehovah were revealed through their teaching. But with the Deuteronomists they were laws.

In Amos there is a breadth of view concerning this covenant relation which is bracing. He takes a long stride in the direction of universalism with his ethical monotheism. He sees the gracious providence of Jehovah guiding the past history of other nations as well as Israel. "Are not ye as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah; have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" (Amos 9:7) What a daring man this sheep-herder was, to put Israel on a par with the Ethiopians, the Philistines, and the Syrians -- all the arch enemies of Israel.

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Furthermore, all nations are judged and their history controlled according to their regard or disregard of a few basic and commonly accepted standards of morality.

(c 1 and 2) As has been suggested above, the most significant statement of Amos was his pronouncement that Israel's favored past, instead of being a ground for special privilege is the basis for special responsibility, and the source of greater condemnation and more severe punishment. "Jehovah is the God of the whole earth, of other nations not less than Israel, and will only be Israel's God insofar as the same morality is practiced in its midst." (1)

Isaiah refers to this defection of Israel from Jehovah as unfaithfulness. He follows Amos and the "E" narrator in stressing the moral conditions underlying Jehovah's favor. Isaiah expresses this idea when he calls Jehovah the "Holy One of Israel". (1:4; 5:19,24; 10:30; 12:6; 17:7; 24:14; 30:11,12,15) The term implies the covenant relations.

But the use of the term holy is a constant reminder of the ethical basis for that relationship. The term meant separateness or things set apart. In popular usage it meant separateness in a ceremonial sense. Isaiah pours into the term a richer and deeper meaning. When applied to Jehovah it describes his apartness in the sense of his majesty and greatness and power, but also the term ascribes to Jehovah an aloofness from Israel in the sense of moral splendor.

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made him morally and nationally free. Even though Jehovah does dwell in Zion, and has guarded Judah's history in the past, still he does not need that nation for his continued existence. "His glory shines apart from Israel". Isaiah, however, never carried this idea out to its logical conclusion. That task remained for Jeremiah to do. Because Isaiah was unable to separate Jehovah entirely from his connection with the nation Israel, he developed his doctrine of the inviolability of Zion. Zion was the seat of Jehovah's power. To hold to this belief in the face of existing conditions, Isaiah saw Zion in two lights, one the real and the other the ideal. The real Zion must be punished and purged of the wicked members if Jehovah is to remain there. But at the same time there is the seed of Zion which is living even now in Zion in the form of Isaiah's group of disciples. (8:16-18) Jerusalem thus is the seat of Jehovah and his presence in that city is made explicit by the holy seed from which is to grow the ideal Zion. Inasmuch as Isaiah could not entirely separate this Zion which is to be, from its partial embodiment in the Zion which now is, he could not bring himself to see how Zion could be entirely destroyed. Jehovah thus dwells among his people and has for them a gracious purpose, but if he is to remain in Zion, by virtue of his character this Judah must be purged and disciplined.

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It is the Deuteronomists who stress most thoroughly the legal basis upon which Israel's relation to Jehovah rests. In view of Jehovah's long gracious dealing with Israel in the past, and of his faithfulness to Abraham, Israel ought to respond with answering gratitude and fear. (4:12; 5:26; 6:2; 6:13,24; 8:6; 10:12; 10:20; 13:5; 14:23; 17:19; 31:6,12,13) In response to the covenant made at Moab, Israel pledges her love of Jehovah and obedience to his commands. (26:17) Jehovah's continued love of Israel demands her undivided loyalty (6:5; 10:20; 11:22; 13:5; 30:26;) and the absolute renunciation of other gods (6:14-15; 7:4; 8:19-20; 11:16-17,28; 30:17-18) and idolatry. (13:2-12; 17:5; 18:20) Israel is to express her loyalty by utterly wiping out all idol-worshippers in Canaan (7:2-4,16; 20:16-18; 7:25) If Israel is disobedient to this covenant, and herself lapses into idolatry, she will be destroyed from off the face of the earth. (6:15) The punishments for disobedience are fever, (28:22) famine, (11:16; 28:23,24) mildewed crops, (28:23) war, (23:22) spiritual blindness, (28:28) national ruin, (28:25,36,35) and exile. (28:30,64) But obedience will bring national prosperity, both in commerce and agriculture, (28:2) increased population, destruction of all enemies, (21:7) the exaltation of Israel above all nations of the earth. (28:1) Israel is to be the international banker (28:13) and the political and religious center with a new spirit and makes possible this obedience. (30:26)



of the world. (28:1-13) We have come now to a place where we can briefly summarize the Deuteronomic philosophy of history, as he gives it in chapter 20. His chief concern is with Israel. Other nations are included in it only in their relation to Israel. Idolatrous nations and enemies of Israel are to be doomed. Only those nations who recognize Israel's superiority and fear Jehovah will be given a history. Israel's own history is put into the setting of a covenant relation. Israel's history is a blessing or a curse depending upon her obedience or her disobedience. (11:26-28) Her early history was a blessing due to the unfolding of Jehovah's first covenant made with Abraham. (30:19) Then it became a curse because they broke the covenant made at Horeb and Moab. (30:1) The exile will have a purging effect upon Israel. (13:6; 17:7,12; 21:21; 22:22) Israel will remember Jehovah and return and obey. (30:2) Jehovah will in turn bring back the captive (30:3) and restore Zion. (30:5)

Ezekiel made one outstanding departure from Deuteronomy and the prophets in his conception of Israel's ability to fulfil the requirements of the covenant. Deuteronomy and the prophets before Ezekiel, both assumed that Israel was capable of performing the duties laid down by Jehovah. Ezekiel, on the other hand, stresses Israel's incapacity for fulfilling the requirements. Jehovah, alone, fills them with a new spirit and makes possible this obedience. (36:26)

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### The New Covenant.

The prophets of the exile meet a new problem with reference to this covenant relation. Israel had broken the covenant, and Jehovah had temporarily divorced her. (Isaiah 40:1; 49:14; 50:1 51:6) The old covenant was dissolved with the exile. Now for Jehovah to redeem Israel, Jehovah must make a new covenant with them. The term is used first by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The prophets and Deuteronomy had stressed the requirements of Jehovah and the people's ability to fulfill them. Jeremiah and Ezekiel despair of the people. (Jeremiah 13:23) The only hope for them rested in God, who will make a new covenant with them. This covenant will be inward and not external, and will involve a renovation of their entire inner life, so that obedience will be spontaneous rather than compulsory. (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26) It is to be a covenant with the individual, therefore it will be universal rather than national. It will include forgiveness for past sins, (Jeremiah 31:34b) and Ezekiel adds that it will be an everlasting covenant which will usher in an era of universal peace both in the human and animal worlds. (Ezekiel 37:26) A fuller exposition of the new covenant will be reserved for the discussion of the Goal of History.

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Before we leave this question let us just recall some of the assumptions underlying the conception of the covenant. The choice of one nation as a special medium for Jehovah's revelation of himself implies the moral freedom of Jehovah. The Cause back of all history is not an impersonal force which makes history to unfold according to some blind mechanical necessity. Back of history is a Person who is both self-conscious and self-directing, and guides history according to consciously chosen purposes. This conception of the choice of one particular nation as the object of God's peculiar favor is nauseating to our more universal conception today. Still in a day when the spirit of nationalism is rampant, we have little right to criticise. In its popular expression, nationalism means that the citizens of each nation believe their nation to be the object of God's special favor. The man who stated that God is a kind of glorified Uncle Sam, while showing a gross misunderstanding of reality, is after all not so farfetched a statement of the actual belief of many American nationalists. But admitting all the narrowness and particularism in the prophets' belief, still we must not forget that Hebrew prophecy in its finest expression is universal and not particular. Amos criticised the nationalistic elements in popular thought when he stated that God's providence is extended to nations outside Israel and placed Israel's own special relations to Jehovah on a strictly moral plane. Neither

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must we forget that Jeremiah in his conception of the new covenant as inward and individual took a long stride in the direction of the only certain basis for universalism which finds unity in a Person rather than a nation. Furthermore, the actual history of religion has to a degree borne out their faith. The nation to which we owe the finest religious and moral insight is the Hebrew Nation. When Amos and the prophets who succeeded him performed the marriage ceremony between religion and morality they made the greatest contribution of all time to religious thought. The covenant is the marriage certificate. It includes both their religious belief in God's care and the moral requirements for its fulfillment.

We have considered more specifically the first aspect of this relation in this chapter; now let us turn to the prophets' conception of Jehovah's moral government of the world. We do not believe that history can be explained on the basis of the rewards of prosperity for virtue and of suffering for disobedience. Such subordination of the natural to the ethical is unsupported by reason. We disagree with the idea of making physical comfort the aim of life. The chief good in life we see to be sacrifice voluntarily assumed in the interest of a great ideal, and believe that history is more nearly a free struggle on the part of man, led and helped by God, to attain those ideals, rather than

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## CHAPTER II

a stage for the working out of a hard-bound system of rewards and punishment. At the same time, the prophets' insight into the fact that there are certain objective moral standards in this world, is a step in the right direction and a conception sadly needed to off-set the flabby relativism of our day. The prophet's conception of the moral constitution of the universe will hold our attention in the following chapter.

their study of and speculation upon history, but rather the prophets used history for its practical teaching value to affirm their inner conviction concerning Jehovah's righteousness. So far as their interpretation of history was concerned, the prophets stated their belief in the righteous rule of the world by Jehovah most clearly in the doctrine of the Day of Jehovah. Through the changing aspects of Israel's history this doctrine was stated differently, but fundamentally it always expressed Jehovah's "righteous reign". The pre-exilic prophets applied the idea to the coming destruction of Israel. It was an expression of hope. For the prophets all Israel's righteousness or Jehovah. In the light of this assumption three problems formed themselves upon the pre-exilic prophets for explanation. First, the contact with Canaan had tended to obliterate the distinctly moral element in Jehovah worship. Israel's barbaric morality for crude, immoral nature worship. Second, the

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## CHAPTER II

## THE DAY OF JEHOVAH

## Jehovah's Righteous Rule.

History became for the prophets the scene of moral progress. It was not so much that they arrived at the idea of Jehovah's moral government of the world through their study of and speculation upon history, but rather the prophets used history for its practical teaching value to affirm their inner conviction concerning Jehovah's righteousness. So far as their interpretation of history was concerned, the prophets stated their belief in the righteous rule of the world by Jehovah most clearly in the doctrine of the Day of Jehovah. Through the changing epochs of Israel's history this doctrine was stated differently, but fundamentally it always expressed Jehovah's "righteous reign". The pre-exilic prophets applied the term to the coming destruction of Israel. It was an expression of doom. Now the prophets all assumed the righteousness of Jehovah. In the light of this assumption three problems forced themselves upon the pre-exilic prophets for explanation. First, the contact with Canaan had tended to obliterate the distinctly moral element in Jehovah worship. Israel bartered morality for crude, immoral nature worship. Second, the

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appearance of the strong, virile Assyrian nation upon the northern horizon threatened the national existence of Israel and Judah, with the result that panic spread throughout the nation, and by a series of clever alliances, the leaders of Israel gave evidence that they considered might a greater force in this world than right. Finally, the past success and prosperity of Judah and Israel left in its wake a train of social evils and injustice. Religious corruption, political scheming, social oppression, -these were glaring contradictions of Jehovah's moral government of the world. When moral suasion failed to convince Israel of Jehovah's righteous rule, the prophets predicted Jehovah's use of stronger methods. Israel must be disciplined to convince her that such actions cannot go unpunished in a moral world. Thus, for the pre-exilic prophets, the Day of Jehovah became a day of doom in which Jehovah's righteous rule is made apparent to all. (Zeph. 3:12; Isaiah 2:3; Hosea 4:3; 3:18b; Amos 5:7)

The prophets of the exile state the doctrine of the Day of Jehovah still differently. Israel was now in exile at the hands of idolatrous nations, whose gods were grossly inferior to the Hebrew's conception of Jehovah. The Day of Jehovah came to mean for them the day of deliverance from exile. Instead of a day of doom, it was to be a day of hope.

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But, again, the primary motive was to express Jehovah's righteous rule. Jehovah had promised to Abraham a glorious future. The fulfillment of that pledge had been temporarily thwarted by the exile. The captivity was justified from the standpoint of Israel's failure to reveal Jehovah's righteousness. But the exile was not final, it was simply a disciplinary measure through which Israel was to be purged of her sins. Now this purging process had gone on, therefore, if Jehovah is to be true to his real nature he is honor-bound to redeem Israel. Deliverance from exile, then, in the minds of the exilic prophets, becomes an expression of Jehovah's righteous rule. (Isaiah 13; Zech. 1-8; Isaiah 40.)

After the exile the situation had again changed. The prophets expected that Israel's deliverance from Babylonian authority, through the victory of Cyrus the Persian in 538 B.C. with its subsequent return of the exiles to Jerusalem the next year would result in the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Jerusalem, now politically free, would become the national and religious center of the known world. This dream failed to be realized, and instead of a nation exalted above all others, Judah still remained the puppet to be tossed about as the vassal of each competing world power. With the passing of the years,

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the faith in Jehovah's moral government weakened and men began to seriously question it. In order that they might bank the coals of Israel's dying faith the prophets cited the fall of nations which had formerly oppressed Israel as outstanding examples that a moral God still ruled on high. Also they saw that two elements, the real and the ideal, still existed in Jerusalem, even after the purifying experience of the exile. Thus the Day of Jehovah became for them a day for purging out the wicked elements in the nation of Israel, (Mal 3:26) and finally, a general day of judgment and purification for all the nations. (Dan. 7:22) Thus, for the post-exilic prophets also, the Day of Jehovah primarily expresses the righteous rule of Jehovah in the affairs of the nations. Of course there were many post-exilic prophets who conceived of all foreign nations who fought against Israel as wicked. For them the Day of Jehovah became a day in which all of Israel's enemies will be destroyed and Israel alone saved.

Thus, the Day of Jehovah, while fundamentally expressing the same idea, was stated differently according to the needs of the various periods in Israel's history. For the pre-exilic prophets it was a day of destruction and punishment for Israel; for the exilic group it became a day of hope as far as Israel was concerned but destruction to her

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enemies; the post-exilic prophets conceived of it as a day of purification. Whatever the form under which it was conceived, it always meant primarily a day in which Jehovah's moral control of the world's history was brought to the light of day.

#### The Day of Jehovah as a Day of Doom.

Amos is the first to use the term the Day of Jehovah. The idea of punishment for evil, however, is implied in the early narratives about the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. During the time of Amos the term popularly expressed an apocalyptic hope in the coming of a day when Israel would experience a period of great prosperity and would emerge triumphant over her enemies. Amos criticised this popular term by filling it with a moral content. The Day of Jehovah, in his hands, became a day of judgment upon Israel. (Amos 5:7) Disaster awaited her (Amos 3:11, 12) which was inevitable, inescapable, and imminent. (Amos 9:1-4)

All pre-exilic prophets follow the leading of Amos in this conception of a day of doom for Israel. All of them conceived of it as near at hand. The different prophets give various reasons for the impending doom. Amos saw it to be an expression of Jehovah's punitive justice. (Amos 3:2)

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Hosea looks beyond and finds in it an expression of Jehovah's ultimate redemptive purpose for Israel. (Hosea 3:4,5) Anger is but the other side of love. For Isaiah, Judah is doomed because she lacked the spiritual insight to make her sensitive to the presence of the Unseen God in Zion. Therefore, Israel must have Jehovah's righteousness burned into her memory by suffering. (Isaiah 8:6) Micah makes the punishment due to a wrong conception of Jehovah. (Micah 3:11; 3:12; 1:6, 7; 7:13)

Empirical elements mark the conception of the Day of Jehovah in the pre-exilic prophets when they link its coming with actual historic movements of nations. There are a few instances in which the belief in a direct divine intervention of Jehovah in history is expressed. These we shall consider later. But the predominant view is that Jehovah uses other nations as his agents for accomplishing his purpose to punish Israel. Amos never specifically named the nation which he believed Jehovah would use, but he implies by his language that it will be Assyria. (Amos 5:27; 6:14) Hosea, living at the time when Menahem paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (cf Hosea 8:9b) no longer hesitates to name Assyria as that nation which is likely to destroy Israel. (13:15-16; 5:8,9; 8:1-3) However, Hosea is not altogether certain, so he names Egypt as an alternative power. (10:11) The last vestiges of doubt disappear when Isaiah confidently affirms

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that Syria and Philistia are to be used in turn by Jehovah to punish Israel. (Isaiah 9:11) Again, he gives a vivid vision of the fierce onslaught upon Samaria by the Assyrians who came at the "hiss of Jehovah" to punish Israel. (Isaiah 5:26-30) Later, both Assyria and Egypt are spoken of as Jehovah's tools for purifying Judah of the unrighteous element. (Isaiah 7:18-20) But the nation uppermost in Isaiah's mind is Assyria. (10:5) When the strength of that nation is sapped by the Scythian invasion of 640-612 B.C., Assyria's influence in Palestine waned. Jeremiah saw in the fierce onslaughts of these Scythian hordes upon Syria the possibility of Jehovah using this nation to punish Israel. (Jeremiah 2:1-13; 2:20-38; 2:14-19; 5:6,17,7; Zeph. 1:14; 2:4) Later, when the Scythian menace died out, Babylon rose to the zenith of power by capturing Nineveh, 612 B.C. She dealt a death blow to Assyria, and defeating Pharaoh-Necho at Carchemish (604 B.C.) blighted Egypt's attempt to return to the throne as mistress of the East, a position which she had lost centuries before. Now the Chaldeans become the instrument of punishment in Jehovah's hands. (Micah 4:10; Jeremiah 25:15-38; 22:24-30; 13:15-19) Jeremiah adds a new element when he represents Nebuchadnezzar as Jehovah's servant anointed to carry out his will in disciplining Israel. Later, Deuteronomy had Cyrus anointed Jehovah's servant for the deliver-

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Jehovah's righteous rule is extended by the pre-exilic prophets beyond the limits of Israel to include the surrounding nations. The beginning of this conception is found in Amos. The great contribution of this earliest of the writing prophets was his conception of Jehovah's universal and righteous control of all history. In chapter one he states that all the nations in the vicinity of Israel, --Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah are to be punished for breaking the common and universally recognized standards of moral decency. (1) Amos assumed a knowledge of moral law in all men (2:1) according to which all nations are judged. Israel herself is judged according to this same moral law. (3:2)

Isaiah, following in the footsteps of Amos, moves on to a fuller statement of Jehovah's righteous rule of the entire world. Isaiah states this faith most clearly in his doctrine of Jehovah's instrumental use of other nations. He is the first to develop to the full this idea which was des-

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timed to have such a long history in the thought of Israel. Isaiah's problem arises as to how Jehovah, who is a righteous God, can now remain in a city in which the majority are wicked. For him to remain, Zion must be purged of her wicked men. Thus, when Isaiah looks out and sees the advancing Assyrian army, and watches nation after nation topple like trees before a cyclone, he rises to a superb insight into the nature of Jehovah. When all Judah stands in fear and trembling before a military force, implying by her attitude that brute force is the only power that controls history, Isaiah announces the exalted conception that a God of righteousness is behind these movements, and uses even these evil forces to express his purpose. In the face of such material forces, Israel's conceptions of Jehovah as a national God dependent for his existence upon the fortunes of his people is a religious faith too meagre to meet the situation. Isaiah saves the day for religion, when in one great leap of faith, he asserts that Judah's conception of Jehovah as a national God is too limited. He is, instead, a sovereign Lord of Righteousness who directs the course of history according to his Sovereign and Righteous Will. "Jehovah reigns supreme alike in the realm of nature and the sphere of human history; the crash of kingdoms, the total dissolutions of .....Judah is a serious objection and renders it very doubtful. See George Adams Smith, Expositor's Bible, p 129f.

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 ... Judah is a serious objection and renders it very doubt-  
 ful. See George Adams Smith, *Expositor's Bible*, p. 1997.

the old order of the Hebrew world which accompanied the advance of Assyria, is to the prophet nothing less than the crowning proof of Jehovah's absolute dominion, asserting itself in the abasement of all that dispute his supremacy." (1) One of Isaiah's most significant contributions to the prophetic interpretation of history is made in chapter 10:5-34 in which he extends the Day of Jehovah to Assyria. Not only does God use other nations to punish his wayward people, but even they are held morally responsible for their acts, and must suffer the consequences of moral misdeeds.

Assyria is the rod in Jehovah's hand for punishing Israel. (Isaiah 10:5) But Assyria does not know of this motive of Jehovah; she is driven on by lust for power (10:7) and boasts that her victories, far from being due to the will of Jehovah, are accomplished by the virility of her princes (10:8) and her military powers and strategy. (10:13-14) Two serious charges are made by Jehovah against Assyria. Failure to see that she was simply an instrument for the carrying out of Jehovah's righteous will for the world led her to overstep her mission; in classing Jehovah as one of the tribal gods she did serious dishonor to Israel's God. (10:12; cf Zech. 1:14, 15) Just as a surgeon who uses unsterilized instruments becomes unfit to carry on opera-

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tions, so Assyria's own vermin-ridden hands are not fit to purge Israel. Thus Assyria herself is to be punished by fire and fever. (10:16-19) As an instrument which a man uses so long as it serves his purpose but which is cast aside so soon as that purpose is accomplished and the instrument's usefulness impaired, so is Assyria in the hand of Jehovah. Nahum, prophesying about the time of the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., exults over the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. He cites the imminent fall of Assyria as a supreme example of Jehovah's moral government of the world. However, contrary to Isaiah, there is no mention of Judah's sin, and Nineveh's fall is entirely due to her insult to Jehovah and Israel, and thus represents a non-moral and nationalistic point of view.

Now the question arises as to how this destruction of Assyria is to take place. Is there in this passage and in verse 12 an early germ of the apocalyptic idea? Does Isaiah mean to suggest that Assyria is to be punished by a sudden and miraculous intervention in history? Verse 17 would suggest that such a speedy destruction was in store for Assyria. This idea later became very prominent in Judah. (cf Ez. 38; Joel 4:12-17; Zech. 12:1-9; Daniel 11:45) Gray suggests two possible interpretations. It may represent the beginning of the idea of an apocalyptic judgment or it may be a later application of the apocalyptic judgment to Assyria. Gray

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favours the latter view. (1) But it seems more reasonable to follow Dr. Knudson and Gressmann, who see here evidence of an early apocalyptic hope which was later given prominence. Dr. Knudson points out that such an interpretation is necessary for the sense of the passage. Only Jehovah is ultimately capable of punishing since all his instruments, like Assyria, will be imperfect. Only Jehovah has the sterilized hands needed for such a delicate operation.

Chapter 18 supports this view. This prophecy was evidently spoken about 711 B.C., when the Egyptian embassies came to Jerusalem to effect an alliance with Hezekiah against Assyria. Isaiah was against such an alliance, for he believed that Jehovah himself was about to punish Assyria. (18:3) He represents Jehovah as calmly resting in Zion as still and untroubled as heat waves on a summer day, or as a fleecy cloud floating motionless in the crystal sky. These are two perfect symbols of the calm, unperturbed watchfulness of Jehovah. But just at the time when Assyria's plans are maturing like the ripening fruit and she is laying new plans like a sprouting tree and increasing her dimensions like spreading branches, Jehovah who has been calmly watching the maturing of these plans from Zion will suddenly intervene at the moment of their realization and prune Assyria, not of her dead branches but of all these sprouts and ripening fruit. (18:5) Then follows a

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 I. G. E. Gray, "International Critical Commentary", vol. I  
 "Isaiah"

swift shift of symbols, and the Assyrian army is pictured as utterly destroyed and the bodies of the Assyrian soldiers provide carrion for birds and beasts for a year to come. (v 6)

Also in the passages 30:30, 31:4,18, this Day of Jehovah is represented as accompanied by natural disasters such as earthquake, hail, and lightning. Only Jehovah can operate these. (cf Amos c 8) Not only is Assyria to be destroyed in this apocalyptic Day of Jehovah but Isaiah extends it to include all nations who fought against Israel. (10:23; 30:38) In 29:5-9 he states that in the destruction of all nations who fought against Israel Jehovah will employ earthquakes and cyclones. Here is the germ of an idea which became prominent during the exile. These passages are great poetic expressions of a fundamental conviction of Isaiah that Jehovah controlled history according to righteous laws. They are not to be taken as scientific statements of facts.

Zephaniah and Jeremiah were called out by the appearance of the Scythians. They both saw in the approach of this nation the doom of Judah. Zephaniah was concerned entirely with the Day of Jehovah. His prophecy would be important except that all of the passages which have significant contributions to make also have a distinctly post-exilic cast to them, consequently they are seriously questioned. His

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prophecy of a universal judgment, (3:8; 11:13) the universal worship of Jehovah, (3:9,10) and the exaltation of the Jews after their restoration, (3:14-20) are generally thought to be post-exilic. Take these passages away and there is little in Zephaniah which has not already been expressed in Amos and Isaiah. However, Zephaniah is the first to compare the Day of Jehovah to a sacrificial feast at which Judah is the victim and her enemies the invited guests purified for the occasion. (1:7; cf. Ez. 39:12ff; Isaiah 25:6, 34:6; Jer. 46:10) Like Amos, the Day of Jehovah is imminent and a judgment on Judah's sins. (1:2,3; 2:4-6,12,13) But there is greater stress laid upon its universal character and relatively less stress upon the ethical. Other nations are to be destroyed, but not because they violated a moral law, as in Amos, but solely because they are Judah's enemies. (2:2-11; cf. also Jeremiah 25)

#### The Day of Jehovah as the Day of Deliverance.

Jerusalem fell before the Chaldeans in 586 B.C., and the second deportation of captives was taken to Babylon to join the first group which had gone in 597 B.C. As has been stated above, this opened up new problems for Israel. Continued faith in Jehovah's righteous control of history depended upon the destruction of Babylon and of Israel's release from the grip of that nation. The exile served the

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purpose of cleansing Israel, (Jer. 29:10-14; Ez. 20:35-38; 5:34a; 34:10,16) and the Day of Jehovah became a day of deliverance from exile which involved the destruction of Israel's enemies.

This conception of the Day of Jehovah including a general destruction for all nations is developed in Jeremiah. Babylon is the cup of wrath which Jehovah is about to make all the nations drink. He does not give any specific reason for this general doom, but from the tenor of his message to Judah, we may be assured that it is moral. (Jer. 25:17-23) Ezekiel also, following more closely the tendency begun in Isaiah 10:33 and 30:38, and developed by Zephaniah, makes the destruction of other nations the result of their enmity toward Judah. In chapters 25-32 Ezekiel has a series of oracles prophesying the downfall of Tyre, Sidon, Edom, Philistia and Egypt. Predictions of Israel's release from Babylon implies the destruction of Israel's captors. Enmity against Judah, exultation over the fall of Jerusalem, profanation of Jehovah's name, all these were causes of their destruction at the hand of Jehovah. (Ez. 25:3,6,12,15; 26:2; 27:3; 28:22,26) Ezekiel views all history from the standpoint of the revelation of Jehovah to the world, and a nation stands or falls accordingly as it reveres or reviles his name. However, there is a more distinctly ethical reason for the nation's destruc-

purpose of cleansing Israel, (Gen. 22:10-14; Ex. 23:22-23; 34:10, 12) and the day of Jehovah comes a day of deliverance from exile which involves the destruction of Israel's enemies.

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tion, and in this Ezekiel follows in the train of Amos and Isaiah. Looked at from another point of view, Ezekiel's warning to other nations is against self-righteous pride. He is saying to them, as Jesus warned the men in his day, that they were not to think that the men upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all others. Instead of an occasion for self-righteous exultation, that tragedy should bring about self-scrutiny and repentance. So, the fall of Jerusalem is not the occasion for self-righteous exultation upon the part of the nations; instead, it was a warning that it was only God's mercy that was withholding from them a similiar fate. Ezekiel follows the leading of the eighth century prophets also in still retaining the idea that Jehovah will work through nations to accomplish his purpose. Thus Babylon is the instrument for destroying these nations. (Ez. 26:7; 30:3; 30:10)

The essential thing to note, however, is that this general destruction of nations is the prelude to Israel's return to Jerusalem. But Babylon still remains the chief obstacle in the way of Israel's restoration. This opens up the whole problem of evil; why should a righteous God permit his people to suffer at the hands of an evil nation? Before Ezekiel's time, another prophet worked upon this problem. Habakkuk is the first skeptic in Israel. He tackles the problem of evil which was later to engage so com-

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pletely the attention of post-exilic writers. Prophets before him were convinced of God's "righteous rule" and were busy working out its implication for the people of his nation. Habakkuk was convinced of God's righteousness, but he also saw that the cruelty and injustice in the world persisted after the work of the prophets had been done. Why did God permit injustice to continue in Israel even after his Law was revealed. So Habakkuk's prophecy was concerned more chiefly with squaring the facts of life with God's character, than with enforcing his righteousness upon the people.

G. A. Smith suggests that two conflicting thoughts strive for reconciliation in Habakkuk's mind. One, the conviction that Jehovah is righteous, the other, the conception that Jehovah is the author of evil; he it is who sends nations to punish Israel. Now, Habakkuk's problem is how to square this violence which has been instigated by Jehovah with his righteous rule.

Cannot we combine the two? First, why does God allow evil men still to persist in Jerusalem? He answers this question by bringing the Chaldeans to punish. Then the second problem arises. Why does God permit to be victorious, a heathen and cruel nation? He answers this not by referring to another nation stronger than Chaldea which would punish Babylon; such a nation was not on the horizon

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at this time. Neither did he refer to an apocalyptic intervention by Jehovah as did Isaiah and Zephaniah; but the world carries its own punishment. Righteousness is in the very constitution of things. Violence is suicidal. The remnant of nations oppressed will rise up in judgment; even inanimate objects cry out against inhumanity. (The very stones will cry out.) We might conveniently phrase Habakkuk's philosophy of history in the terms of Jesus of Nazareth: "He that taketh the sword shall die by the sword." Some time later Haggai sees in the general revolution among the nations which were controlled by Persia an illustration of this same principle that violence will ultimately destroy itself. This general shake-up in the nations he sees to result in the recognition of the unique place of Jehovah as the source of peace and national stability. In gratitude for that revelation they will send rich gifts to Jerusalem so that the temple which they are rebuilding will surpass in beauty even that of Solomon.

Deutero-Isaiah states in clearest terms the idea that the Day of Jehovah is to be a day of deliverance for Israel. This writer, from his home in Babylon, watched Cyrus within a few years rise by a series of campaigns from a ruler of the insignificant kingdom of Anshan, a kingdom vassal to Media, to the controlling power of the whole of Asia Minor. Rebellious against Astyages, King of Media, in 553, Cyrus



himself became King of the Medes. After this victory the Persians joined him, and shortly after he added Lydia to his kingdom, together with a number of cities in Asia Minor. Finally, in 539 B.C., he captured Babylon; "by a single campaign he destroyed a mighty state." It was this phenomenal rise of Cyrus, and the almost certain destruction of Babylon which called forth the prophet of the exile with his message of hope for Israel. Cyrus was Jehovah's servant for the deliverance of his nation Israel. With Deuteronomy and Isaiah a new conception of Jehovah's instrumental use of another nation arises. Persia is to be Israel's deliverer, and not her captor.

#### The Day of Jehovah as a Day of Purification.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah had represented the exile as being Jehovah's method for disciplining and purifying Israel. But after the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 537 B.C. the prophets of the post-exilic era found that the ideal Israel had not been realized. The previous distinction between the real and the ideal Israel, which the prophets had hoped would be erased by the exile, still persisted. Wickedness still remained within their midst, and was the cause of Israel's wretched condition. The next step in their conception of the Day of Jehovah is to make it a day of purification for Israel.

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### The Day of Jehovah as a Day of Vindication.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah had represented the exile as being Jehovah's method for disciplining and purifying Israel. But after the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 537 B.C. the prophets of the post-exile era found that the ideal Israel had not been realized. The previous distinction between the real and the ideal Israel, which the prophets had hoped would be erased by the exile, still persisted. With sadness still remained within their midst, and was the cause of Israel's wretched condition. The next step in their conception of the Day of Jehovah is to make it a day of vindication for Israel.

Zephaniah is the first to express this function of the Day of Jehovah. In a quaint figure of speech he represents the principle of evil as an old woman named Wickedness, whom Jehovah's angel places into a bushel basket and carries to a far country. There he builds a house for her so that she will set up her permanent abode away from Israel. (5:5-11) Malachi follows out this same conception and describes the Day of Jehovah as a day in which Jehovah sends his messenger who is like "a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap" (Mal. 3:3) He will come suddenly and purify the priest, and purge out all guilty members of the community. (3:5) Evidently the problem of evil had become acute among the Jews. Job's question concerning the reasonableness of the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous became a practical problem for the parish priest. "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his charge and walked mournfully before Jehovah of Hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God and escape!" (Mal. 3:14,15) Malachi answers this question by developing the idea of the Day of Jehovah as the future day of judgment for the wicked and the redemption of the righteous. (4:1,2) It may appear that Jehovah's righteousness is not operative in the world, nevertheless, a day is coming when his righteous will will be clearly manifest to all. Here is the first clear statement of the Day of Jehovah as a Final Judgment.

Ephraim is the first to express this function of the Day of Jehovah. In a certain figure of speech he represents the principle of evil as an old woman named "Wickedness," whom Jehovah's angel places into a wooden basket and carries to a far country. There he builds a house for her so that she will not see her person and go away from Israel. (5:5-11) Malachi follows out this same conception and describes the Day of Jehovah as a day in which Jehovah sends his messenger who is like "a reaper's time and like the fuller's song." (Mal. 3:1-5) He will come suddenly and purify the priest, and purge out all guilty members of the community. (3:2-5) Evidently the problem of evil had become acute among the Jews. Job's question concerning the righteousness of the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous became a practical problem for the Jewish world. "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his charge and walked mournfully before Jehovah of Hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yes, they that work wickedness are built up; yes, they tempt God and escape!" (Mal. 3:14, 15) Malachi answers this question by developing the idea of the Day of Jehovah as the future day of judgment for the wicked and the redemption of the righteous. (4:1-2) It may appear that Jehovah's righteousness is not operative in the world, nevertheless, a day is coming when his righteous will will be clearly manifest to all. Here is the first clear statement of the Day of Jehovah as a final judgment.

Both Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel had filled the people's thought with visions of a glorious return of the captives to Jerusalem, (Ez. 36) after which Israel was to receive the homage of the nations. (Ez. 37:28) The real return was but a faded replica of the ideal. Only a little band straggled back to the ruined heaps at Jerusalem. Poverty, the opposition of surrounding nations, the enormity of their task, all combined to discourage the returned exiles, and the dream of a restored Judah faded before the light of reality. The nations did not do homage to Jehovah. Instead, Israel was attacked and taunted by the petty kingdoms close at hand, and remained but a small, poverty-stricken community, paying tribute to Persia, when they had hoped that the nations would be paying tribute to Judah. To sustain the hope of the people, and inspire them to restore Zion, a group of prophets arose who assumed that the Day of Jehovah for Israel lay in the past. Following out Ezekiel's thought of the exile as a period of purification, they assumed that Israel was a purged nation, while all of Israel's enemies were wicked inasmuch as they opposed Jehovah. Thus the distinction which the early prophets made between the righteous and the wicked gives way to a contrast between Israel and the nations. The Day of Jehovah became a day of destruction of the nations, and the salvation of Israel. We must remember however, that the Israel

Both Dabaro-lalish and Ezekiel had filled the people's thought with visions of a glorious return of the captives to Jerusalem. (Ez. 36) After which Israel was to receive the homage of the nations. (Ez. 37:28) The real return was but a faded replica of the ideal. Only a little band struggled back to the ruined heaps at Jerusalem. Early, the opposition of surrounding nations, the enormity of their task, all combined to discourage the returned exiles, and the dream of a restored Jewish faded before the light of reality. The nations did not do homage to Jehovah. Instead, Israel was attacked and ravaged by the petty kingdoms close at hand, and remained but a small, poverty-stricken community, paying tribute to Persia, when they had hoped that the nations would be paying tribute to Israel. To sustain the hope of the people, and inspire them to restore Zion, a group of prophets arose who assumed that the Day of Jehovah for Israel lay in the past. Following out Ezekiel's thought of the exile as a period of purification, they assumed that Israel was a purged nation, while all of Israel's enemies were wicked inasmuch as they opposed Jehovah. Thus the distinction which the early prophets made between the righteous and the wicked gives way to a contrast between Israel and the nations. The Day of Jehovah became a day of destruction of the nations, and the salvation of Israel. We must remember, however, that the Israel

who is to be saved is the reformed and purified Israel. Therefore, this destruction is proof of Jehovah's moral government.

This type of thought began with Ezekiel who represents a future general destruction of the nations after which the Kingdom of God is set up. Ezekiel represents Israel's traditional foe from the North as a union of all nations under a mysterious Gog of Magog, who at some future date not stated will gather all his forces before Zion. Jehovah himself will descend and destroy Gog and all his forces. The slaughter will be so great that it will take seven months to bury the dead, and the weapons captured will be so many that it will take seven years to burn them. (Ez. 30:39) Here is the first distinctly apocalyptic conception of the Day of Jehovah. No longer is it imminent, but it comes at some indefinite future date. It will be a general destruction of all nations and the salvation of Israel, not by any divine agent, but by Jehovah himself who will directly intervene in history. (cf. Zech. 14:3,9,12)

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prophetic current of thought was his stress upon individual responsibility. But later Judaism traces its origin back to Ezekiel in whom both its priestly and apocalyptic elements may be found. It is necessary to differentiate rather sharply between the prophetic and the apocalyptic types of thought. The prophets laid great stress upon the moral and ethical nature of Jehovah. So far as their doctrine of God was concerned the prophets were ethical monotheists. This involved ethical requirements for the nation; -social justice, righteousness and kindness, international respect and faithfulness. Jehovah's favor came only to these nations which had shown their ethical fitness to receive it. Punishment for evil-doing was imminent and was to be carried out by nations used by Jehovah for that purpose. That is to say, there was an empirical element in the prophets' interpretation of history. The apocalyptic writers laid less stress upon the nation's ethical fitness to receive Jehovah's favor, and put greater stress upon national favoritism. Distinctions became less moral and more national; any nation that opposed Israel was doomed not so much for moral delinquency as for the simple fact of opposition. Furthermore, the empirical element which characterized the prophetic interpretation of history is lost. The Day of Jehovah is pushed into the distant future, and punishment is inflicted by the

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direct miraculous and spectacular intervention of Jehovah himself. Prophecy, loosened from its anchorage in empirical facts, took wings and became highly fantastic in its construction of history. One reason for the grotesque symbolism of the apocalyptic writers doubtless lay in the fact that in order to save their lives they had to veil their prophecies in poetic allusions rather than make direct reference to the nations to whom Israel was vassal. As an interpretation of history it becomes a symbolic and wishful picture of the future entirely severed from facts. If, however, we ascribe cognitive value to man's moral and emotional nature, their interpretation of history becomes of value in that it is fundamentally an affirmation of their profound belief that righteousness is at the center of things and that ultimately judgment must fall upon these nations who by their treatment of Israel have done violence to moral law. Their pictures of the future are fanciful and poetic, but their underlying motive is at least in a degree moral indignation at the inhumanity of controlling nations.

Zechariah takes up the theme of Ezekiel and makes it central. To save the faith of his people, he asserts Jehovah's moral government of the entire world. (1:18-21) In the vision of the smiths and the horns, the horns represent scattered Israel, and the smiths the nations which took her captive. These nations are to be overthrown; since there

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is no nation upon the horizon capable of dethroning Persia, it is to be accomplished by the Heavenly Hosts sent by Jehovah. Here he departs from Ezekiel in making angels the agents of Jehovah. He conceives them under the symbols of four chariots which go in all four directions to subdue the entire earth. (Zech. 6:1-8) Another reason for the development of the apocalyptic conception of the Day of Jehovah may be Zechariah's pronounced distrust of force. He urged his people not to resort to it even when they are hindered by the Samaritans in their work of rebuilding the temple. (4:6b-11a) He seems to be the spiritual descendant of Habakkuk who saw that force was suicidal. Consequently he could not think of Jehovah employing nations for this work.

Among some of the post-exilic prophets this Day of Jehovah takes the form of a Final Judgment. We have seen how the conception began in Malachi. Trito-Isaiah and Joel describe this final judgment in which nations are destroyed and Israel saved as particularistic; Trito-Isaiah represents Jehovah as returning from Bozrah with garments dyed and dripping with the blood of the nations which he has judged. (Isaiah 63:1-6) Joel represents the Day of Jehovah as a day of decision. Reversing the prophecy of Micah and Isaiah, Joel represents Jehovah as sending out a proclamation to the nations to "beat their plough-shares into swords and their

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pruning hooks into spears" (3:10) in preparation for the coming conflict with Jehovah. When the nations are all assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of decision, then Jehovah with natural upheavals will destroy all nations and save Israel. Isaiah puts all upon an equal basis in this day of world judgment for the nations. (Isaiah 24:2) While Jehovah will reign in Mount Zion, (24:23) still the judgment is made upon the basis of broken laws and violation of Jehovah's everlasting covenant, (24:5) and the slogan in that day will be "Glory to the Righteous". (24:16) Thus his conception of judgment is less nationalistic and more moral. Daniel points in this direction in making the Last Judgment a day for the vindication of saints and the establishment of Jehovah's everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace. (Dan. 7:22f)

The fundamental idea back of the prophetic conception of the Day of Jehovah we have seen is the revelation of Jehovah's righteous rule of the world. Whether the Day of Jehovah was stated as a day of doom for Israel, or extended to include the destruction of the nations and the deliverance of Israel, or as a day of purification first for Israel and then for the entire world, resulting in the setting up of the Kingdom of God, or a final judgment upon mankind, the fundamental idea is the same. Of course there is a dif-

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ference in the conception of righteousness. For the pre-exilic prophet, righteousness was essentially moral and ethical. This arose from the nature of the situation. The menacing appearance first of Assyria, and then of Babylon, with their policy of military subjection and inhuman practice of erasing all national distinction by uniting several nations under one governor, and of deporting whole populations to a distant land, led the prophets to ponder deeply upon the reason for the national humiliation and possible extinction of Israel. The only way they could square these facts with their conception of a righteous and gracious God was to see in them judgment for Israel's religious, political, and social misdeeds. They thundered their messages of doom in the hope of bringing Israel to repentance and thus avert disaster. Now after the exile, the problem was different. The prophets were confronted with the task of encouraging a dejected and broken people to set about the task of political restoration of a ruined nation. But this nation was still subject to another power and with the passing of the years the dream of a restored kingdom faded, and their only hope of any kind of community life rested in a people organized upon a religious basis. Righteousness came thus to have a more legalistic and ecclesiastical connotation than formerly. The distinction was made between Israel and the nations. The righteous were the

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Jehovah-worshippers and the wicked were all who failed to give homage to Israel's God; and the great terms of justice, loyalty, and faithfulness employed by the pre-exilic prophets are almost lost from the vocabulary of the post-exilic writers. There is a tendency to cast aspersions upon these prophets of the post-exilic era. I think we may enter into a fuller appreciation of them if we realize that the task of the prophet is to address himself to the problem of his day. The problem after the exile was to take this dejected and discouraged people and give them hope and some kind of inner unity. This the post-exilic prophets did and to their work we are all debtors, for out of this reorganized Israel came Jesus of Nazareth. But, however this may be, the thing in which we are interested is that whatever application the prophets made of the conception of the Day of Jehovah, it was a revelation that behind history there was a Person who controlled it according to his righteous will, no matter how that term righteousness was interpreted. "History is a moral process with a goal toward which it is moving". (1)

At the conclusion of this chapter a word may be said concerning the prophets' attitude toward war as revealed in the light of the above study. The prophets were opposed to the use of force. They opposed political intrigue and militarism. (Isaiah 31:3; Jer. 9:24) We have seen all along that a divine purpose and not the scheming of nations control

1. A.B. Davidson, Hastings' Bible Dictionary - "Eschatology"  
vol. I - p 734

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history. We noted that Habakkuk unfolded the principle that force was suicidal. The prophets looked for an era of peace. (Isaiah 2:2-4; Hosea 4:3; Zeph. 3:13; Ez. 34:28; Zech. 4:6b-11a) However, the prophets did not denounce war as a principle. We feel that even Jeremiah's insistence upon non-resistance and Isaiah's distrust of arms is largely explained upon the basis of the utter folly of Israel opposing nations as vigorous and strong as Assyria and Babylon were. And in Isaiah 10:5ff, we see that Jehovah does not hesitate to use armies to discipline Israel.

However, the prophets would not agree with those bellicose moderns who would make war a biological necessity. War existed for a purpose and is not the expression of some blind impulse to fight, or a necessary instinct for racial limitations. War is carried on in the interest of justice and righteousness. The prophets saw good in the advance of foreign nations inasmuch as it came as a punishment for those who oppressed the weaker classes; but so soon as those nations became predatory and carried on war for the purpose of exploitation they were condemned. War for the protection of a weaker nation was justified. Deutero-Isaiah hailed Cyrus, the Persian, as God-sent, when he came against the Chaldeans. The entire question rests upon a nation's outlook upon other nations. Are they for

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## CHAPTER III

## THE GOAL OF HISTORY

History is a revelation of God's grace and is controlled by his righteousness. Now is there a purpose? Pondering over the election of Israel the question must sooner or later arise as to why Israel was elected. And in reviewing their glorious past one must eventually ask to what purpose is all this undeserved grace? Also, a world that is morally governed must be to some end. The dynamic for moral and sacrificial living is soon lost in a world which ends in oblivion. Value is inherent in the very conception of moral government. So it was not long before the prophets began to stress that Jehovah was working out the history of this world according to some pre-conceived gracious plan and his righteous control of it is in the interest of some "far-off divine event toward which all creation moves." That there is behind history a gracious and righteous Personality was a conviction of all the prophets. But persons are purposive and intelligent; so the next step in their thinking was to make this world the arena in which this gracious and righteous Person worked out his will according to a consistent purpose for the realization of a divinely appointed goal.

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## The Purpose in History

Isaiah is the first of the prophets to state that there is a thread of a consistent purpose running through history, with a definite goal in view. Neither Amos nor Hosea stated any real aim in Jehovah's choice of Israel. Amos made it the act of a Sovereign will and Hosea saw in it simply an expression of Jehovah's free love of Israel. But with Isaiah, "Jehovah is not only supreme power but also consistent purpose." (1) Isaiah states clearly the nature of this purpose in 2:11. It is to exalt Jehovah before the eyes of men. The aim of history is to cause men universally to recognize that a sovereign will controls history. If history exists only to teach nations to recognize the fact of an absolute divine power, it is open to serious question as to whether or not such a purpose is worth while. Just to realize that a unitary force is behind the world is barren, unless that force is given a character. But the prophets could not think of God as revealing his character except through the teaching of his prophets. While Isaiah does not definitely state that other nations will learn of Jehovah's character through the prophets, still if the nations came to fear Jehovah, the next logical step for them to take is to seek from Israel knowledge of the character of this unitary power.

1. G. B. Gray, International Critical Commentary, "Isaiah"  
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But to return to the discussion of Isaiah's conception of the purpose in history, he asserts that any nation which denies the control of Jehovah and self-confidently relies upon its own resources and fails to realize that it is simply the tool of Jehovah's will is doomed. (10:15) All nations who fought against Judah, and derided Jehovah, will in the Day of Jehovah come to the knowledge of the reality which lies behind all historic movements. In the light of Jehovah's plan, the petty plannings and conquests, the pride and boastings of the nations will be like a bad dream from which they are rudely awakened in the Day of Jehovah by the sudden realization that history is the arena for the operation of Jehovah's sovereign will, and not, as they supposed, for the chance display of national prowess. (Isaiah 17:12-24) Isaiah himself sees this plan clearly. So he alludes to the folly of feverishly securing the water supply and repairing the walls of Jerusalem in the face of a threatened attack. The attack of Assyria was purposed long before by Jehovah as a punishment upon Judah. To oppose it is the utmost folly. (22:11) This purpose includes the final destruction of Assyria. (14:24,26) But while this purpose is perfectly clear to Isaiah, to the rank and file of the nation it is unseen. Jehovah dwells in Zion, unseen but all-seeing. His presence in Zion is like the clear, motion-

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less summer heat, or like a fleecy summer cloud floating motionless high in the clear atmosphere. In like manner Jehovah dwells unseen in Zion, unmoved, untroubled, calmly watching the movements of the surrounding nations. (18: 4 ff) The self-sufficient princes with spiritual sensitivity dulled by long over-indulgence of the sense nature, taunt Isaiah brazenly, challenging Jehovah to haste with his work so they can see it, and to speak his counsel so they can know it. (5:19) But simply because the purpose is not seen by those men whose only source of knowledge is sense experience, does not make it any the less real. In fact, since the great majority fail to see Jehovah's plan, then that plan is all the more dangerous to Judah. Thus Jehovah is like the unseen rock over which Israel will trip or like a trap into which she will fall. (8:14)

Jeremiah goes beyond Isaiah and insists that Jehovah's purpose is more than simply to make majesty and power revered by the nations. Jehovah's motive is to reveal his righteous character. The highest good in life is to know Jehovah, "who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth." (Jer. 9:24) Israel's mission in the world is to reveal the nature of Jehovah. (13:11) When Israel fails to do this, then Israel must be punished. Jehovah chose Babylon to discipline Israel and for her to resist

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 4:16) The self-sufficient princes with spiritual negativ-  
 ity defined by long over-indulgence of the same nature,  
 cannot resist bravely, challenging Jehovah to battle with  
 his word so they can see it, and to speak his counsel so  
 they can know it. (Isa:19) But always because the purpose  
 is not seen by those who know only surface of knowledge is  
 same experience, does not make it any the less real. In  
 fact, since the great majority fail to see Jehovah's plan,  
 then that plan is all the more dangerous to Israel. Thus  
 Jehovah is like the unseen rock over which Israel will trip  
 or like a trap into which she will fall. (Isa:14)

Jehovah goes beyond Israel and insists that Jehovah's  
 purpose is more than simply to make asjesty and power rever-  
 ed by the nations. Jehovah's motive is to reveal his right-  
 some character. The highest good in life is to know Jeho-  
 vah, "who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteous-  
 ness in the earth." (Jer. 9:24) Israel's mission in the  
 world is to reveal the nature of Jehovah. (Isa:11) When Is-  
 rael fails to do this, then Israel must be punished. Jeho-  
 vah chose Babylon to discipline Israel and for her to reveal

the Chaldeans is certain doom, since they are resisting Jehovah. It is from this standpoint that Jeremiah's message of submission is to be interpreted. (Jer. 27:8-9, 12 f )

Ezekiel's entire interpretation of history can be expressed in the words "I wrought for my name's sake." History, as the prophet conceives it, whether of Israel or of other nations, is Jehovah's revelation of himself to mankind; every movement of it carries this burden: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." "The wave of history pauses on the shore when Jehovah's glory rises on the uttermost ends of the earth." (1) This revelation began in Israel, but is to be carried to all nations. To Israel Jehovah is to be known as he is, his inner nature and the principles by which he governs the world. Prophets are punished because they failed in this. (13:9) The suffering of Israel is to reveal Jehovah's name. Their entire past history has been to make known to Israel the gracious and righteous nature of Jehovah. (20:42-44) The functions of the prophets is to make Jehovah's character known to the people. (24:24) A day is coming when Jehovah will pour out his spirit on all Israelites and they shall know his inner nature. (Ez. 39:29; 36:27; 37:14; Isaiah 32:15; Joel 2:28) To Israel, the revelation of Jehovah is made directly through the prophets and by

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37:14; Isaiah 32:15; Joel 2:28) To Israel, the revelation

of Jehovah is made directly through the prophets and by

the outpouring of Jehovah's spirit.

But not only is Jehovah's purpose to reveal his nature to Israel, but also to the nations. This revelation, however, is not made directly to the other nations, but they see Jehovah through Israel and through his judgment of the nations. The captivity of Israel is to reveal to the nations that Jehovah is righteous and cannot countenance evil. (39:23) Jehovah's judgments upon other nations are to reveal his righteous nature to them. ( Ez. 25:5,7,11,17; 26:6; 28:22; 29:9; 30:19; 35:9,15) In order that nations in the future who have not witnessed these judgments may know Jehovah there is to be an apocalyptic judgment of all nations at some future time. (38:16; 38:23; 39:6,7) But the nations had been given a false picture of Jehovah's nature through Israel's captivity. (36:20) They thought that Jehovah was not strong enough to protect his own people. Therefore, his purpose in redeeming Israel is to make his power and gracious nature known to the nations. "And I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them, and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah." (Ez. 36:23)

"Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, Jehovah have builded the ruined places and planted

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that which was desolate; I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and I will do it." (36:36)

The next step in the prophetic conception of a purpose in history, is that Jehovah not only aims at making his name known to a nation, but more than that he plans to be universally worshipped. In preparation for this Jehovah will starve out all competing gods. (Zeph. 2:11) The very splendor of Jehovah will attract nations to Zion. (60:3) Nations will join with Israel, (Zech. 2:11) and make yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the tabernacles. (Zech. 14:9 f) Malachi has a vision of altars to Jehovah being scattered over the earth. (1:11) Jehovah proposes to make Zion the religious center of the world. It is to be the religious and moral educator of all nations. (Isaiah 2:2-4) In all these above instances of Jehovah's purpose the prophets have not said a word about the conversion of the world; we have a feeling that in all of them the respect and loyalty of the nations has been compelled as a result of the horror at the coming of the Day of Judgment. This is clearly expressed by Trito-Isaiah. He pictures a day when it will be necessary for Zion to keep her gates open day and night to admit the continuous stream of tribute and the captive kings entering the Holy City. Any nation that refuses to serve Israel is doomed. (Isaiah 60:11, 12, 14)

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How refreshing it is after considering the above passages to turn now to the purpose which Deutero-Isaiah conceives of Jehovah having for the world. Jehovah uses history to reveal his universal character in the interest of establishing a universal religion. (Isaiah 51:4-6) But there is this difference from any other purpose of which the prophets have conceived. His aim is the conversion of the world, not its subjugation. Israel is Jehovah's people, chosen for the express purpose of saving the world. (Isaiah 40:27-31; 49:14f; 16-21) This insight of Deutero-Isaiah grew out of his profound reflection upon the meaning of suffering in Israel's history. Close contact with Babylon revealed that the nation which at a distance had appeared so imposing, viewed at close range was shorn of her glamour by the shallowness of her moral and religious life. This gave him the clue to Judah's national humiliation. Judah by her suffering was to teach Babylon a nobler and loftier conception of religion, by bringing her to worship Jehovah. Deutero-Isaiah has fittingly been called the evangelist of the Old Testament. Some time later another prophet outraged by the exclusiveness of his people told a delightful story of Jonah and his mission to Nineveh, in which he sought to arouse the people to the mission to which Deutero-Isaiah had summoned them.

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This book which has been the most misunderstood book in the Old Testament, and has suffered unmercifully from the most fantastic of literal interpretation, is in reality the most catholic book of the entire Old Testament. Men have wrangled over whether the book is literally true or whether it is a beautiful story with a profound moral lesson, never intended to be taken as the actual account of an historic event, until we have often missed the real aim of the book. We do not know the name of the author of the book. From internal evidence, it is certain that he was a prophet writing at the close of the fourth century B. C. Following the custom of that day, he wrote under a pseudonym. The reason for this, of course, was that inasmuch as the Prophetic and Mosaic Canon had been closed, any new writings must be written under the name of a former prophet to give them standing. The writer selected Jonah, a prophet living during the era of Assyrian control. ( II Kings 14:25) But waving aside the question of the historicity of the events recorded in the book, let us consider its object. This has been variously conceived. Some have seen in it the purpose of teaching repentance, first to Jonah, (c. 1-3) and then to Nineveh. (3:1-3) Others say its object is to set Jewish exclusiveness in its true light. Still others tell us that its main purpose is to contrast Jewish selfishness with God's liberality. These may be secondary

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aims, which can all be included in the primary. The author of Jonah sees the supreme purpose in the Hebrew history is for that nation to take their religion to the other nations. This mission for Israel is in marked contrast with the popular idea which made the Day of Jehovah a time for the destruction of all Israel's enemies and the subjugation of the remnant which was left. (Zech. 14:16)

In all of these purposes there is one common element. The different prophets may state it in varying terms, but fundamentally all of them saw that history was primarily for the purpose of unfolding to the world the power and nature of Jehovah and the principle by which he governed the affairs of man. A purpose in history, moreover, implies an end toward which history is moving. There must be a human embodiment or expression of this purpose. This goal all of these men see in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The prophets differ as to the time when this kingdom is to be set up. Among the eighth century prophets, Isaiah especially, the belief was that Assyria stood in the way of the coming of the kingdom. With the fall of Nineveh, Jehovah would set up his kingdom of righteousness and peace. (Isaiah 14:25; 18:7) This is especially plain in chapters ten and eleven. Assyria is first to purge Israel; then Jehovah will make a full end of Assyria. From the stumps of

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a nation left in Israel will shoot out the green sprouts of a new kingdom of Jehovah. Micah, seeing that exile is the certain fate of Israel puts off the kingdom until after the exile. (Micah 4:8,12) Ezekiel makes a distinction between the restoration of Israel and the final kingdom of heaven. At the close of the exile Israel is to be restored and enjoy a period of prosperity. This, however, is temporary. The kingdom of God will come after the final destruction of all Israel's enemies organized under the mythical general Gog. The time for this great apocalyptic destruction of nations is hidden. In putting off the coming of the kingdom to some indefinite future date, Ezekiel made a great contribution toward sustaining the religious faith of his people.

When the predictions as to the time of the coming of the Kingdom failed to materialize after the exile, the people lost hope. Zechariah and Haggai, faced with the problem of inspiring this dejected people to establish community life upon a religious rather than a political basis, made the fact that Israel had not rebuilt the temple the reason for the tardy coming of the Kingdom. (Haggai 1:8,9) If Israel will but rebuild the temple then Jehovah will return to Zion and begin his rule there. (Zech. 8:20-22) The laying of the cornerstone of the temple marks the beginning of Jehovah's changed attitude toward Israel. (Haggai 2:18,19)

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But the most common thought after the exile is that Jehovah will first destroy the enemies of Israel after which he will return in triumph and set up his Kingdom in Zion. (Haggai 2:22f; Zech. 2:8-12; Obad. v 15-21; Isaiah 59:15b-21; 60:10-14; Zech. c 12-14) For some the kingdom came only after the final judgment upon the earth. (Mal. 3:16 - 4:3; Isaiah 24:21-23) Daniel especially made Jehovah's everlasting kingdom of saints the crowning act of his conflict with the last of four successive world powers to which he has given in turn the control of the world. (Daniel 7) This wide diversity in the date of the coming of the kingdom is due to the actual historic happenings. As time went on and the more specific predictions of the earlier prophets failed to be fulfilled, to save the faith of the people the later prophets placed the advent of the kingdom at some distant and indefinite future time. Here is profound religious insight, for it kept hope alive in the hearts of the people.

#### The Kingdom of God

Old Testament thought on the final outcome of all history is rich and varied. The prophetic conceptions of the Kingdom of God is as diverse as life itself. The pre-prophetic conceptions of the Day of Jehovah as a day of natural fecundity, national triumph, and an earthly kingdom

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with a Davidic King, are echoed in the prophets. But each of these conceptions can be matched with ethical, universal, supramundane and individualistic ideas. Conceived of as a nationalistic paradise, a political commonwealth, a religious community, or an everlasting kingdom of saints, the idea of the Kingdom of God carries a content of meaning as diverse as the minds that worked upon it. A distinct development can be traced in the prophetic conception of the goal of history from the naturalistic to the ethical, the nationalistic to the universal, the social to the individual, and from the this-earthly to the spiritual.

It was a common belief that the Kingdom of God would be a day of unprecedented productivity and prosperity. This belief has a long history in Israel. The "J" and "E" narrators conceived the history of man as beginning in a garden of Eden, and the sustaining hope of the children of Israel was their belief that to enter Canaan was to return to the garden of Eden, the land of promise and the country flowing in milk and honey. Palestine was a land that depended entirely upon the rains for her produce. It was a land in which a drought meant famine and suffering. In a quaint figure Hosea pictures the ideal day for Israel as a time in which the heavens will be responsive to the needs of the earth, and will

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answer her demands for rain. The earth will be quick to satisfy the needs of the seed. (Hosea 2:21-22) Isaiah, in a striking passage, looks forward to a time when due to the abundance of rain and the exceeding fertility of the land bumper crops will be produced. The cattle will graze in rich pastures. There will be no dry seasons, but instead every hill will abound in brooks. (Is. 30:18-25) A passage in Amos, doubtless by a later hand, expresses a similiar conception. The ground will be so fertile that the man ploughing the ground for the next crop will overtake the reaper of the last sowing. The growth will be so rapid that before the sower completes the sowing, the seeds which he first planted will have borne their fruitage of grapes. (Amos 9:13; cf Zech. 8:12; cp Ez. 36:35; 34:26-28; Joel 4:18-21) The day of famine and drought is ended. (Ez. 36:29; 34:29) There will be an end of poverty. (Zech. 8:12) Not only will the earth bring forth in abundance, but Israel is to enjoy great commercial prosperity. The wealth of the nations will flow to Zion. Mount Zion will be covered with dromedaries bringing riches, and the ships of Tarshish will be willing servants to carry the wealth to Jerusalem. The gates of Zion will be ajar night and day, to admit the stream of tribute entering the city. (Isaiah 60:5,6,9,11) Hosea compares Jehovah as dew unto Israel who will revive her, and in the future Israel will

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be renowned for her beauty, prosperity, and productivity. (Hosea 14:5-7) Two problems confronted the returned exiles; first was the question of a national home, and second, when so few responded to the appeal to return, there arose the question of population. If Israel was to have such a glorious future, where were they to get the people necessary to comprise a nation. So Jehovah guarantees to Israel a national home. (Ez. 36:5) The future Jerusalem is to be so large that it will be useless to build a wall about her; her dominions will run out to all lands. (Zech. 2:4) Jehovah will increase Israel's population; (Zech. 36:10) the re-peopling of Israel will be miraculous and sudden. (Isaiah 66:7-14) But the finest thought of Israel was not content with the conception of the goal of history as an economic and agricultural garden of Eden. The naturalistic elements gave way before the advent of the ethical and moral conception of the coming Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God, means, if anything, that God's righteousness and justice are made the laws of society. Just as some of the writers conceived of the coming prosperity as a return to the garden of Eden, so do some look for the Kingdom of God to restore Israel to the moral purity of her early history. Hosea represents the wilderness as the period of Israel's innocence (9:10) and history

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culminates in the reestablishment in Israel of those early principles of justice, righteousness, loyalty and faithfulness. (Hosea 2:14, 15b, 18, 19) Isaiah sees it to be a return to the pristine purity of the days of the Judges. (Isaiah 1:25-29) A general purification of Israel must be the prelude to the coming of the Kingdom. (Isaiah 1:25; Ez. 30:38; Isaiah 4:4; Zech. 5:5-11; Mal. 3:2-4; 4:2) It will be a time when the rights of the poor will be protected. (Zeph. 3:12) Men will have real insight, and a man will be known for what he is. A man will be honored not according to his dress and station, but according to his character. (Isaiah 32:5) It will be an era when falsehood and chicanery are at an end; men will deal truthfully with each other, out of pure motives. (Zech. 8:14f) Just as we today select some slogan to describe the most characteristic aspect of a city's life, so the slogan by which Zion will be known is "The Home of Righteousness". (Isaiah 1:26) All of her inhabitants will be righteous men. (Isaiah 60:21)

A question arises in this connection concerning the prophet's conception of the close relationship between righteousness and prosperity. Their conception of the Kingdom as a day of productivity, prosperity, and physical comfort is not an expression of just natural desire alone. "The world was, to their view, a moral constitution, the

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physical being nothing but a mode of expressing or a medium for transmitting the moral and spiritual; the miseries of men and all outward evils of life were the result of moral disorder; and simultaneously with the disappearance of moral evil, physical evil would also cease, and with the perfection of the people of God the external world would be transfigured, and become the perfect minister to the needs of mankind." (1) Are the prophets right in assuming that physical prosperity is the necessary postlude of moral living? There were those among the prophets themselves who doubted the maxim that prosperity is the reward for virtue and suffering the reward for evil.

In our modern scientific age with our conceptions of natural law, any suggestion of a Personality using nature to teach a moral lesson or to reward moral living is tabooed. And yet there is a germ of real insight in this conviction of the prophets which we would do well to stress today. We are in the grip of a crude, materialistic, and mechanistic view of the world. This age needs to be told that nature is not ultimate but instrumental. It is under the control and surveillance of a Divine Person, and is used by him to accomplish his purposes. For that group who reduce everything to Ideas and make matter an illusion, there is also an element of truth in the prophetic teach-

1. "Prophets and Prophecy"- Hastings' Bible Dictionary  
vol. IV. p 126

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ing which needs to be developed and stressed. Matter as instrumental has a certain phenomenal reality. Nature is God's code for signalling his messages to mankind. To be sure this is not the sole end of the divine activity in nature. Nature may have an existence for other beings than human and may serve other than purely human ends. The order of nature is to reveal God's moral government of the world. Of course we can not hold to the doctrine in the form which the prophets did. Earthquakes and famines are not direct judgments for evil doing. Still they perform a disciplinary function in the world. What is more significant, anyone with moral insight at all knows, is the fact that there is a direct connection between political intrigue, legal sophistry, and business graft and the destiny of a nation.

A people with so strong a sense of racial solidarity as the Jews possess, facing the possibility of national extinction, must of necessity express their faith in the Ideal Age in nationalistic terms. Isaiah looks forward to a new ethical commonwealth in which Zion will return once again to the ideal rule of the Judges. Ezekiel looks for a reunion of Judah and Israel under one king who will have an eternal reign. (Ez. 37:16-27) Before the exile this hope of an ideal political commonwealth was limited to Israel. But after the exile, when Israel remained a vassal to one world power after another, it became a dream of the univer-

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sal dominion of Israel. The destruction of the nations and the exaltation of Judah is to be followed by the political lordship of Israel. (Zech. 1:16f - 2:10) The captives of foreign nations will rebuild the walls of Zion, (Isaiah 60:10) and tribute will come to her from all nations. (Isaiah 60:6,9,11; Hag. 2:7)

Ideas vary as to who the ruler of this new Kingdom is to be. Some make it a representative of Jehovah, and others see it to be Jehovah himself. Among the pre-exilic prophets, Isaiah especially, this future ruler is conceived of as a Davidic King. The great Messianic passages in Isaiah look to this Davidic ruler to establish an everlasting reign in righteousness and peace. (Isaiah 9:1-7) He is to be endowed with keen insight, a practical nature which will bring things to pass, and a deeply religious spirit which will control and guide the intellect and the will. (Isaiah 11:2) The most distinctive feature about him will be his moral and ethical zeal. (Isaiah 11:5; cp Isaiah 32:1-8 and 1:26-28; cp Ez. 34:23; 37:24-27) Isaiah never definitely named who this ruler was to be. In one passage he states that he is a Wonder Child about to be born. (Isa. 7:10 f ) But never did he make him concrete, nor did he definitely state the time for his coming.

Not so with Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai names Zerub-

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Not so with Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai names Zerub-

babel as the chosen of Jehovah. (Haggai 2:23) Zechariah divided the honors between Zerubbabel, the political governor, and Joshua, the High Priest. (Zech. 4:14; 3:6-10; 2:6-9) Here we can see the hopes of a reconstructed nation Israel giving way before the conception of Israel as a religious community. And later on Jehovah himself is the one who will become the direct ruler of the world and is to set up a Theocratic government without a representative. Zechariah portrays in vision the triumphant return of Jehovah to Zion where he is to be crowned the King of the Nations. He is a lowly king, but his dominion will be universal. (Zech. 9:9-10) A later prophet describes vividly the Coronation Feast at the beginning of Jehovah's reign. (Isaiah 25:6-8)

An era of peace marks the rule of Jehovah, whether he reigns through a king or governs directly. Practically all of the prophets looked with longing eyes toward this coming day when war would be no more. Some prophets did not include the other nations in it; Israel and Judah were to come to an era when other nations would no longer attack them. (Joel 3:9-17; Hosea 2:18; cp Ez. 34:28) No walls need be built about Zion since Jehovah will protect it. (Zech. 2:1-5) Other prophets extend their dream of a warless world to all the nations. (Zech. 9:10; Isa. 2:4; 9:5,9; Mic. 4:3)

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A few prophets look for a day when the enmity between animals (Isaiah 65:25) and between men and animals (Isaiah 11:8; Ez. 34:28) would cease. The knowledge of Jehovah and trust in his righteousness alone will be the necessary prelude to the coming of a warless world. (Isaiah 11:9; 32:17) This leads us naturally into the universalistic elements in the prophetic conception of the goal of history.

We have previously noted in Amos the germ idea of the universal, providential control of history, and Jehovah's universal government by a few basic ethical laws. (Amos 9:7; c 1,2.) One might expect that from such expressions of ethical monotheism would come the conception of a goal for history which included all nations. But Amos does not take that step. It is left for Isaiah to catch the first glimpse of the universal nature of the Kingdom of God! (Isaiah 2:2-4; cp Zeph. 3:9) Nations will come to Zion to learn of Jehovah's ways, and from Jerusalem shall go forth the law. Jeremiah also caught a glint of this hope. (Jer. 12:14-17) Jehovah will punish Israel as well as other nations, but in the restoration, instead of Israel only being brought back, as the other prophets have taught, he saw all oppressed peoples restored to their own lands. Many expositors deny these passages

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to the prophets whose names they now bear. The argument is that the exile and subsequent pitiful history of Israel as a vassal state provided the occasion for including other nations in their idea of the goal of history. The prophets were first confronted with the problem of disposing of other nations in a monotheistic world only when they rubbed shoulders with other nations. It is very possible, then, that the above two passages are either of exilic or of post-exilic origin; but while it may make a change in the date of the rise of the conception, it does not change the fact that some writer had universal ideas about the Kingdom of God. The first and most clear-cut expression of a goal for all nations comes with Deutero-Isaiah. The high point in Deutero-Isaiah is the extension of the gracious purpose of Jehovah to all the world so that "unto him every knee should bow and every tongue should swear." (Isaiah 43:23) Here is the touch-stone of Deutero-Isaiah's universalism. God has become the only God, the creator of all things, the moral dynamic of the world, the gracious spirit overshadowing all mankind; the spirit which aims at universal salvation. "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6) We have noted above that some prophet at a later period, outraged by the narrowness and bigotry of his day, summoned his nation to carry out this

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program of world salvation which Deutero-Isaiah had laid down. (Jonah) Another prophet, writing in the period of the Greeks, rises to a superb height of universalism when he had courage enough to put Assyria and Egypt before Israel in the order of receiving Jehovah's blessedness in the Ideal Day. "In that day Israel will be third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." (Isaiah 19:24,25)

A question naturally arises as to the relation between particularism and universalism. There always existed in Israel those prophetic souls who were strongly against any broadminded and tolerant attitude toward the customs and the religion of other nations. The history of the activity of Israel's prophets is that of one long battle to conserve the distinctive features of Israel's religion and civilization. Israel was the nation of Jehovah's choice, and he would do nothing except he reveal it through his prophets. The revelation of Jehovah's will was full and complete in Israel itself; other nations had no contribution to make to its religious life. The prophets set their faces against political alliances because it inevitably meant the adoption of foreign religion and customs. They were opposed to religious syncretism and urged the retention of Jehovah worship

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in all its native purity. After the exile, the tendency to exclusiveness hardened into a rigid bigotry. In reaction to it arose a group of men who were more favorable toward other nations, and saw in them elements which Israel could well afford to include in her own civilization. Now which of these courses is to be followed? In this day when we are stressing the truth that Christianity will never come to its finest expression until every nation has made its contribution to it, we are likely to be intolerant of the exclusiveness of Israel. But when we confront those who strive for religious eclecticism and would construct a pantheon in which the Christian God is simply included on an equal basis with those of other nations, then we find our sympathies with the more intolerant tendency in Israel's life. As a matter of fact, the attitude of the Hebrew prophets is a good norm. Before the exile, during the reign of Manasseh, when the fever of religious syncretism ran high, these messages of religious conservatism were strongly needed to stem the tides of eclecticism, which if allowed to run their course would surely have submerged all that was of distinctive and eternal worth in the religion of Israel. But after the exile, when Israel became so hide-bound in her exclusiveness, to save religion again from becoming cramped and esoteric there arose these prophets of universalism in strong reaction to the particularism of their day.

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Thus religion must be broad enough to welcome the peculiar contributions of all nations and races, but yet narrow enough to conserve the kernel of eternal worth and value in it.

Not only was the prophets' view of the goal of history naturalistic and ethical, nationalistic and universal, but also it was social and individual. The predominant thought among the prophets of Israel was that Jehovah was the God of the nation, and religion an affair of the commonwealth, rather than of the individual. This is especially clear in Hosea. God is the husband or the father of a nation and not of individuals. Isaiah states it in his phrase the "Holy One of Israel". He developed his doctrine of the Inviolability of Zion principally because he had not yet arrived at the individualistic conception of religion. He saw the ideal and the actual in Zion, but he could not separate the ideal from its embodiment in the actual sufficiently to be able to conceive of Zion, the dwelling place of Jehovah, destroyed and Jehovah still live on. With this conception of religion as social rather than individual came the hope that the ideal age would be in the nature of a religious community. (Ez. 40-48) Zion is to become the Mecca of the world. Within her walls all nations will keep tryst with Jehovah. (Isaiah 2:2; 60:3) The temple will be called the "House of Prayer for all Peoples". (Isa. 56:7)

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The nations will come to offer sacrifices to Jehovah at Jerusalem. (Isa. 66:20) The people of one city will entreat those of another to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to seek the favor of Jehovah. (Zech. 8:21) There will be ten men to plead with every Jew for permission to worship in his temple. (Zech. 8:23) The task of Jerusalem will be the moral and religious education of the world. All national difficulties will be settled at religious rather than national conferences. (Isa. 2:3) Any nation that refuses to worship Jehovah in this day when the world is organized upon a religious basis is to be destroyed. (Isa. 59:12; Zech. 14:17) But there is a development from the prophetic conception of the goal of history as social to recognition of the value of the individual. Individualism in Israel arose on the ruins of Jerusalem. On the day that Jeremiah sent his letter to the captive Jews in Babylon, urging them to worship Jehovah in Babylon, and promising that Jehovah will hearken when they pray to him in a foreign land, personal religion was born into the world. (Jeremiah 29:12, 13) Of course men had always felt that Jehovah had relations with individual men. The experience of the prophets can be explained on no other basis, but Jeremiah is the first to divorce Jehovah from his nation Israel. This divorce was not complete, but he took a long step toward Him who severed religion from the last string of national affiliation by cen-

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tering religion in a Person and making mankind the goal of all life. The classic statement of Jeremiah's conception of personal religion is chapter 31:31-33. Since we dealt with this under the "New Covenant" we simply mention it here, and pass it by. The other great exponent of individualism is Ezekiel. He has been rightly called the prophet of individualism. His most significant contribution to the thought life of Israel is his insistence upon the individual responsibility of both man and God.

Ezekiel was made a watchman over the house of Israel in captivity. Jehovah places upon him the responsibility of the captives. He is to warn them against sin. If he is silent, the responsibility for Israel's sin falls upon him, since Jehovah has spoken to him. (3:16-18; 33:1-6) Not only is Ezekiel responsible for the actions of his people Israel, inasmuch as Jehovah has revealed his will unto him, but also each enlightened Israelite is responsible for his own sin. In 18:1 Ezekiel quotes an old adage which Jeremiah had previously quoted. (31:29) Jeremiah, however, put it in the future tense. Ezekiel makes it present. No longer are the children to suffer for the sins of their fathers, but each man suffers for his own sin. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (18:4)

# WATERFALLS

## SECOND

He goes on to state that a father is not held responsible for the sinful ways of his son, nor is a son to be excused from a righteous life because of his father's sinfulness. Guilt is inalienable, in Ezekiel's view. Here is individualism of the strictest sort. Ezekiel seems to have no conception whatever as to the social nature of sin. Possibly the most striking expression of his conception of each man's individual responsibility for his own life comes out in 18:32 when he asserts man's freedom to turn to Jehovah.

Ezekiel carries this sense of responsibility up into the nature of God. In 1:26-28 he sets God apart from the world and stresses his transcendent and individual character. There is no room for the conception of an immanent God in Ezekiel. But the most striking expression of God's individuality is in his responsibility for Israel. God saves Israel for his name's sake. (36:21) That is to say, he will restore Israel so as to vindicate his own good name. There is value in this for Israel to keep her from self-satisfaction. He does not save Israel for their sakes. They are only to be ashamed of their doings, but he saves Israel out of an attempt to save his own name before all the nations. In order that he may more fully reveal his nature he will of his own free

he goes on to state that a father is not held responsible for the sinful ways of his son, nor is a son held responsible for a righteous life because of his father's sinfulness. This is in fact, in Israel's view, more a reflection of the strictest sort. Israel seems to have no conception whatever as to the social nature of sin. Probably the most striking expression of his conception of each man's individual responsibility for his own life comes out in 18:22 when he asserts man's freedom to turn to Jehovah.

Israel carries this sense of responsibility up into the nature of God. In 18:25-28 he sets God apart from the world and stresses his transcendence and individual character. There is no room for the conception of an immanent God in Israel. But the most striking expression of God's individuality is in his responsibility for Israel. God saves Israel for his name's sake. (30:24) That is to say, he will rescue Israel so as to vindicate his own good name. There is value in this for Israel to keep her from self-satisfaction. He does not save Israel for their sakes. They are only to be ashamed of their Godless, and he saves Israel out of an urge to save his own name before all the nations. In order that he may more fully reveal his nature he will of his own free

will give Israel a new heart and a new spirit. (36:26) In chapter 37, Ezekiel gives us the reason for this one-sided message of individualism. His purpose is to bring hope to a disheartened people. Israel he likens unto a valley of dry bones, and this message of Jehovah's purpose to redeem Israel even though they are undeserving, should bring a response of gratitude which would restore hope to the dejected people.

Finally we may note that the prophets conceived of the future Kingdom both in earthly and in spiritual terms. From the foregoing distinction we need not tarry longer than to mention the first. The fact that it will be a day of unprecedented productivity or a day of the national triumph of Israel and the reign of her Davidic King, or a day in which the world is organized as a religious unit all worshipping Jehovah is sufficient proof that the principal hope of the prophets was in the coming of an earthly kingdom. A few, however, conceived of the Ideal Age in more spiritual terms. "For, behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isaiah 65:11; cp 66:22) It seems that in this apocalyptic sense are we to understand Daniel's everlasting kingdom of saints. (Daniel 7:14-22)

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We have considered the prophetic conception of the goal of history, and found it rich and varied in content. But through it all runs this one familiar strain: a purpose runs through all history which culminates in a Kingdom of God. The prophets' conception of that kingdom is clothed in a cloak of many colors. For the most part this cloak is to be cast off as the product of its age, as something which has outlived its usefulness; nevertheless it clothed a living and universally valid faith that history has for its goal the creation of a society among men in whom God's will is made operative. No matter whether that goal is conceived of naturalistically, or ethically, nationally or universally, socially or individually, spiritually or earthly, the fundamental conception is a group of men among whom God lives. The finest thought among the prophets makes this a community of ethical and spiritual men.

But now how is this goal of history to be attained? What is Jehovah's plan for the realization of his purpose and goal for history? Four methods are suggested by the prophets. First, through the gracious past, the judgments and the restoration of Israel, other nations will learn of the nature and power of Jehovah. Second, by virtue of a universal judgment of all nations they will be brought to

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fear and reverence of Jehovah. Third, through the deliverance and future glory all the nations will be attracted to Israel in the interest of experiencing a similiar destiny for themselves. In all of the preceding methods the influence upon other nations has been unconscious on Israel's part. But with Deutero-Isaiah we reach the peak of Old Testament thought when he conceives of Israel's mission as that of the Suffering Servant. Her mission is to consciously save the world, by suffering vicariously for them. Finally, Daniel makes the first statement of what is later to become so prominent a hope in Israel even down to the time of Jesus. The kingdom is to be set up by the apocalyptic Son of Man at the end of the present world order.

Ezekiel is the first to develop fully the conception of Israel's place in the scheme for the redemption of other nations. He places constant stress upon the fact that Israel's entire history is to be viewed from the standpoint of Jehovah's attempt to guard his name from profanation, and make it honored among the nations. (Ez. 20:9,14,22,38, 44; 36:10,21,22-28) Israel's history is to teach the nations the power and grace of the God who is behind it. We have had occasion above to describe the apocalyptic Day of Jehovah for the nation, as having educational value in teaching them that there is behind history a power not of themselves which makes for righteousness. (Ez. 37-39; Zech. 14)

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The most common conception of Jehovah's plan for establishing his kingdom is the scheme that Israel's deliverance will have the power of attracting the nations to Jehovah. "And this city shall be to me for a name of joy, for a praise and for a glory, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them, and shall fear and tremble for all the good, and for all the peace that I procure unto it. (Jeremiah 33:9) As a result of this deliverance the nations will know Jehovah. (Ez. 36:36) All nations are summoned to look upon Jehovah as their saviour. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:22f) When Jehovah returns to dwell in Zion, then will "many nations join themselves to Jehovah in that day." (Zech. 2:11; cp 8:23; Isaiah 60:3)

One of the problems which the exile brought to the minds of Hebrew thinkers was the reason for Israel's suffering. In a moral universe suffering must be to some end. Deutero-Isaiah is the first to give real insight into that problem. He started with the assumption of all prophets that Israel was chosen for some purpose. (Isaiah 49:1) Israel was a choice arrow which Jehovah kept hidden to use for a very special purpose. (Isaiah 49:2) Previously it had been thought that that purpose ended in the restoration of the actual Israel by the Ideal. (Isaiah 49:6a) But that

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is too meagre a task for Israel; her task is to carry salvation to the ends of the earth. (42:4; 49:66) Now how is Israel to set about this task. This Deutero-Isaiah answers in the servant passages, and in doing so, gives his conception of the meaning of Israel's suffering. (50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) There have been many attempts to associate this passage with the experience of an individual. But the tendency now is to interpret this as the career of Israel. The ascription of individual suffering to the nation may be a composite of the experience of many individual sufferers in Babylon. The conception here is that the ideal element in Israel has voluntarily suffered with the nation. They have taken upon themselves the punishment due to the rebellious ones in Israel. Their suffering is to have the effect of throwing into relief the great ideals for which they stood. The un-ideal in Israel and other nations, who, at first, thought the suffering of the ideal Israel to be a judgment of God, will come to see that this was a vicarious sacrifice voluntarily assumed to reveal to others the great ideals for which they were willing to die if need be. The suffering of Israel was to a purpose. No longer is it the punishment for evil doing alone. No longer is physical comfort the chief end of life, but rather great moral and spiritual ideals for which a nation will suffer if need be. The self-sacrificing life becomes the highest good in life.

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We have only to wait for the One who trod the road to Calvary's brow to have this principle taken from its nationalistic connection and made the highest good in all life. Neither Deutero-Isaiah's conception of a universal mission for his nation nor his conception of Israel as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah found a place in the ghought life of Judaism. Israel never became a missionary nation, and she revolted from making the self-sacrificial life the highest good. Deutero-Isaiah must await the coming of Jesus of Nazareth to lift his conceptions into their full significance.

The thought life in Israel which was moving in the direction of an apocalyptic conception of God's method for redeeming the world came to its clearest expression in the book of Daniel. From internal evidence in chapters 10 and 11, it is certain that the book was written in the Greek period, during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It was published about 165 B.C., in the midst of the Maccabean Revolt to encourage the steadfastness and loyalty of the people whose hopes of holding out against the strong Syrian Empire were fading. God has a plan in history which He has revealed to his servant Daniel. God has given the government of the world successively into the hands of four world-empires, the Babylonians, Medians, Persians, and Greeks. ( c 2 ) The world was now in the grip of this last power. But as all succeeding empires, it held its rule only because of the grace

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of God. It was soon to be destroyed, and "One like unto a 'son of Man' " would come in clouds of glory to set up an everlasting kingdom of the saints of the earth. (Daniel 7: 9-14; 7:17f -- 27) It was for later thought to develop to the full the conception of the apocalyptic "Son of Man". But here at least is found in germ that conception which later, during the Inter-Testamental period was to become so controlling.

Before we leave this chapter let us retrace our steps. Back of the movements of history stands a Person as its cause and explanation. But a person implies a purpose. Historic movements become the language through which this Person makes known his power and nature and the laws according to which he governs the world. The object of this gracious and righteous control of history is to set up the Kingdom of God. Various methods are to be employed in ushering in this Kingdom. They aim to touch all the motives which move men to action. Judgments upon nations will drive them to Jehovah out of fear. The hope of a favored future such as Zion enjoys draws them. The picture of the Suffering Servant awakens their love and gratitude, the strongest of all motives to moral living.

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## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

## General Summary

Our study has revealed three major elements in the prophetic interpretation of history. There is back of all the movements of history a gracious and righteous Person as their cause and director, one who guides all history according to his gracious and righteous purpose to the end that he might establish a Kingdom of righteousness and peace. The miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and the history of her rise from a little community of slaves to a nation, can be explained only on the basis of her election and protection by a gracious and loving God. But this same watchful care is extended to other nations who also have been providentially led, even though they have not recognized that leading. While the covenant involves on the one hand Jehovah's promise of faithfulness to Israel, it also places certain ethical requirements upon Israel. If Israel breaks the covenant by failing in her moral responsibilities a day of judgment follows. Primarily the Day of Jehovah is a day of judgment upon sin, whether it comes upon Israel, or the nations, or is conceived of as a last judgment. Whether its purpose is punitive and disciplinary, or the puri-

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fication of the world as a prelude to the coming of the Kingdom of God, it is a day in which the distinction between righteousness and wickedness will be made so clear that no one can fail to see it. The Day of Jehovah is a great dramatic proof that this world is run upon the principle of righteousness and truth. The movements of history, the crash of kingdoms, natural disasters, - all these are cited as evidence of Jehovah's righteous and sovereign control of history. "Not man but God determines history." (1) The outcome of all this is that his righteous and gracious purpose may be worked out in the world to the end that a Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and truth may be set up among men. Spoken in another connection, but applicable here, is Dr. Knudson's statement: "The only essential thing was the conviction that Jehovah through the faithful in Israel would work out his own righteous and beneficial purpose in the world." (2) The prophetic conception of the kingdom of God is not fixed and static, but moving. It shows development from the naturalistic conception of it as a day of unprecedented productivity, prosperity and population, to the ethical conception of it as an era in which righteousness and peace reign supreme. Their conceptions progress from the nation-

1. G.B.Gray, International Critical Commentary. "Isa. p LXXXI
2. A.C.Knudson, "Beacon Lights of Prophecy" p 158

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alistic idea of Israel as the coming world power to the universalism of later prophets who thought of all nations as being of equal independent worth in the sight of God. Finally, the prophets move from a social and this-worldly view to an individual and supramundane conception of the coming kingdom. A similiar development can also be traced in the prophetic thought with regard to the method for bringing in the future age. Early thinking conceived of the glory of Israel both in her past history and future redemption, combined with the judgment which is to fall upon Israel's enemies, as being the means of attracting other nations to Jehovah who brings all this to pass. Later, Deutero-Isaiah completely moralized the method for ushering in the kingdom, by developing the conception of Israel as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah whose conscious mission is the redemption of the world. Instead of comfort being the goal of life, Deutero-Isaiah makes self-sacrifice the chief good.

Davidson would make the prophetic interpretation of history the most important element in the prophetic teaching, to which the prophets even subordinated the moral element. The ethical and religious teaching is always secondary, and the essential thing in the book or discourse is the prophet's outlook into the future. "The burden of

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the teaching of all the great canonical prophets is that the downfall of the state is imminent; that it is Jehovah who is to overthrow it; that the nation which shall overthrow it, be it Assyria or Babylon, is the instrument of Jehovah, the rod of his anger, raised up by him to execute his purpose. And the prophets' religious teaching regarding the nature of Jehovah and the duty and sin of the people, is subordinate and meant to sustain his outlook into the future, and to awaken the mind of the people to the truth of it. Their outlook embraces also that which lies beyond, for all moral interpositions of Jehovah seem to them always to issue in the coming of the perfect kingdom of God; and the final condition of the people is virtually their chief theme." (1)

#### Final Evaluation

But this is the interpretation of history of a group of thinkers living between two thousand and twenty-eight hundred years ago. Is there anything of value in it for us today? Can there be elements of permanent worth in a theory of history worked out by men living in a pre-scientific age, among whom the religious view of life is controlling? Is it to be cast aside as a product of primitive thinking which we have long since outgrown?

1. A.B. Davidson, Hastings' Bible Dictionary - "Prophets and Prophecy" - vol. IV, p 119

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There are certain elements which are of temporary value only in the prophetic interpretation of history. The prophets were men of their own day, and clothed their ideas in the language, and under the thought limitations, of their own times. These alloys of only temporary worth must be smelted out, before the button of pure gold can be recovered.

The prophets lived in a pre-scientific and pre-critical age of thought. In their view of history they curiously mingled poetry with exact observation. The conception which the pre-exilic prophets had of the glorious and innocent past of Israel, during the early wilderness days, as well as in the period of the judges, is an idea unfounded in historic facts. There is no basis for thinking that all idolatry began when Israel entered into Canaan, or that the purity of Jehovah worship was first stained by Canaanitish soil. If we can trust the narratives at all, there are instances of idolatry in the Wilderness days. The tendency of the prophets to illumine the past with the light of the ideal is the inevitable tendency of the uncritical mind to throw over the past the rich, luminous mantle of romance. Side by side with this must be placed that other predisposition of the uncritical mind to paint the future in glowing colors taken from the palette of the imagination.

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Exilic and post-exilic writers were more prone to do this than the pre-exilic writers. The pre-exilic prophets cited actual historic movements as illustrations of God's control of history. But with the break-up of the nation, apocalypse became the prevailing mode of prophetic expression, and in the main, prophecy became a wishful picture of a future, marvelous, divine deliverance and exaltation of Israel; while the goal of history was imaginatively pictured as a day in which all the nationalistic and naturalistic dreams came true. In general, we can say, the prophetic interpretation of history is deficient in a critical, empirical grounding, and often makes a distortion of facts to fit the prophet's particular view of history. Little value can be ascribed to the prophetic interpretation of history if we limit it to the intellectual, but if we ascribe cognitive significance to the moral and emotional nature, then it has elements of real worth as expressing a profound faith in the moral constitution of the world.

Let us now turn to a more specific criticism of the leading ideas in the prophetic interpretation of history. The anti-Calvinistic temper of our day is unfavorable soil in which to grow any doctrine of divine election. It might be pointed out that many have fled from spiritual determinism only to run into the toils of a materialistic determinism. But waving aside that whole question, there remains a

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Let us now turn to a more specific criticism of the existing ideas in the prophetic interpretation of history. The anti-Calvinistic temper of our day is unfavorable soil in which to grow any doctrine of divine election. It might be pointed out that many have fled from spiritual determinism only to run into the coils of a materialistic determinism. But waving aside that whole question, there remains a

more serious objection to the prophetic doctrine of national election. So far as it expresses their conception of God, national election would be henotheistic rather than monotheistic. As such, the prophets' view of history would have little validity in a day when monotheism is the prevailing mode of thought. Furthermore, the doctrine of national election is fundamentally nationalistic. To be sure, some of the prophetic utterances put Israel upon the same moral plane with other nations. Admitting that the prophets were ethical monotheists, still their interpretations of history reflect their own nationalistic prejudices. Except for a few outstanding illustrations to which attention has been called in the preceding discussions, the prophetic interpretation of history is, in one sense, a misnomer; it is more truly the prophetic interpretation of the history of the Hebrews, and touches the history of other nations only at those points where those nations effect the history of Israel. Still we need to be reminded that while we reject the prophetic doctrine of national election, yet at the same time we must reckon with the fact that the deepest religious insights have come from the Hebrew people. Moral precepts may be matched in other religions, but in their conception of the character of God and the ideal of humanity the Hebrews are supreme.

more serious objection to the prophetic doctrine of national election. So far as it expresses their conception of God, national election would be monotheistic rather than monothestic. As such, the prophetic view of history would have little validity in a day when monothestic is the prevailing mode of thought. Furthermore, the doctrine of national election is fundamentally nationalistic. To be sure, some of the prophetic utterances put Israel upon the same moral plane with other nations. Admitting that the prophets were ethical monotheists, still their interpretations of history reflect their own nationalistic prejudices. Except for a few outstanding instances alone to which attention has been called in the preceding discussions, the prophetic interpretation of history is, in one sense, a misnomer; it is really truly the prophetic interpretation of the history of the Hebrews, and touches the history of other nations only at those points where those nations affect the history of Israel. Still we need to be reminded that while we reject the prophetic doctrine of national election, yet at the same time we must reckon with the fact that the deepest religious insights have come from the Hebrew people. Moral precepts may be matched in other religions, but in their conception of the character of God and the ideal of humanity the Hebrews are supreme.

There is much in the prophetic teaching concerning the day of Jehovah which is open to attack. All of the prophets subordinated nature and war to the ethical categories; natural disasters, military movements were both directly used by Jehovah to chastise Israel for her sins, while prosperity and peace were the natural accompaniments of moral living. There is no reasonable ground for such a subordination of the natural to the ethical. "God makes the sun to shine upon the just and the unjust." However, the prophets were in their naive way expressing a truth, namely, that dishonesty in business, political chicanery, rigid class distinctions, and legal injustice break the confidence and morale of the people and sooner or later ends in national ruin. No more can we hold that warfare is used by Jehovah to punish particular erring nations. The corollary to this would be that every defeated nation is the sinful one. There are other than religious and ethical causes of war. As a matter of fact religious and moral motives are but the partial explanation of wars, for there is no war in which the economic causes do not operate, and in many these function to the entire exclusion of the moral and religious. On the other hand, let us remind ourselves that great military upheavals have had the effect of calling men back to the conviction that the world is morally constituted. There is an element of truth in the prophetic

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affirmation that intrigue, disrespect, avarice, and disloyalty between nations breeds suspicion and hatred which ends in war. Nevertheless, in these immoral practices, all nations are involved, both offensive and defensive, and out of every war all nations, both defeated and victorious, emerge the losers.

Israel's doctrine of Jehovah's instrumental use of outside nations to punish Israel, is a decidedly sub-moral idea. The implication of the doctrine is that other nations have no independent significance for the kingdom of God. This idea is offset to some extent by the universalism of later prophets, but the idea taken by itself is sub-moral. Only nature has an instrumental relation to God, nations being composed of independent, morally free persons, are ends and not means.

In another connection, a criticism of the apocalyptic elements in the prophetic interpretation of history was made. It need only be recalled here, that it is foreign to any modern attempt to understand the causes lying back of historic movements in that it represents a wishful picture of the future with empirical foundation entirely lacking. Shorn of its fantastic symbolism, and its naturalistic coloring, the apocalyptic conception of history does reveal a profound trust in the moral government of the uni-

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verse. Furthermore, the apocalyptic teaching of the prophets is to be explained as the poetic thought form of their day which has no validity for a scientific world view. It also runs counter to the modern conception of evolution. There is at present a revival of apocalyptic and chiliastic teaching among certain Christian sects, but such a doctrine has no scientific standing in the light of our modern conception of progress.

Much in the prophetic description of the coming Kingdom of God we see to be temporary. We no longer so confidently describe the glories of the future era of God's reign. Their descriptions of the unprecedented productivity of the earth and the prosperity of Israel seem naive to us. We have a revival of this hope in the modern socialist's dream of an economic paradise. There is this difference, however, between the prophets and the dream of the socialist. The prophets believed that the physical was the medium for God's expression of his moral purpose for the world. And consequently when all evil was purged out of the world, prosperity and productivity would of necessity follow. There is with the socialists no connection between prosperity and ethics. Prosperity for the oppressed comes only at the conclusion of bitter class war. No more can we sympathize with the fantastic dreams of the universality of Jehovah worship to which the prophets looked forward.

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Nevertheless, there was a deeper element of truth in the prophets' conviction than they themselves saw. In a finer and more spiritual sense Zion has become the religious Mecca of the world, and from her the Christian message has gone out to the ends of the earth. Finally, the prophets' almost exclusively social view of religion with its nationalistic associations Jesus of Nazareth transcended when he made religious unity to consist in a Person and not a nation. In general we are out of sympathy with the entire endeavor of the prophets to make their descriptions of the future age concrete and definite. We live by faith, and "It doth not yet appear what we shall be". Christianity has purged the prophetic teaching concerning the kingdom of God of its nationalism, materialism, and militarism, and has developed its universalism, spiritualism, and individualism.

There are however, certain elements of permanent worth in the prophetic interpretation of history. That there is a personal God behind all human history as its causal ground and persistent purpose, that the world stands in an instrumental relation to God as the expression of his gracious and righteous purpose for mankind, and that there is a coming Kingdom of God composed of men among whom the will of God is freely and completely obeyed is the conviction of the finest minds of all time and a faith of real and permanent significance. Deutero-Isaiah made one more significant contribution

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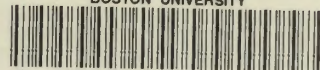








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